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ABSTRACT

Drawing on the experience of public schools in Ann Arbor, Michigan, this document details a planning model and process of middle level reorganization. Following an examination of the impetus for change and how recent changes in the nation's economy, demographics, and family structure have shaped the context for educational change, collaborative planning for middle level reorganization is explored in terms of necessary preliminary steps, forms of participation, district planning, and school-based planning. Second, strategies for ensuring that all school and community segments are informed about the implementation of new programs are discussed, and the functional role of dissent is explored with attention given to ways of dealing with dissent. The development of support activities focused on the needs of the staff, students, and parents during the transition is explored, and strategies for dealing with possible pitfalls such as loss of commitment and teacher dissent are suggested with emphasis on the importance of clear planning and evaluation. A planning checklist, middle school philosophy, parent survey, student survey, pilot evaluation form, implementation plan, communication schedule, and decision matrix are appended as well as information on the teacher transfer process, the developmental needs of middle level students, and professional organization contacts. (CLA)

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PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Successful Implementation of Middle Level Reorganization

Ronald Williamson

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Successful Implementation of Middle Level Reorganization

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
RESTON, VIRGINIA

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PREFACE

Changes come hard to most people. Confronting a change means giving up the comfort of familiar practices or events, losing the reassuring sense that events will remain predictable, and knowing that, at least until new systems are mastered, we are not entirely in control of our lives. At the same time, the forces acting upon us—economic, political, demographic, and social—require us to adjust our behavior, often dramatically and often in a very short time.

So it is with schools. The old ways of doing things in schools are pretty comfortable for most of us. At the same time, forces outside the institution itself are changing the clients we serve, the context in which we work, and the very nature of the expectations that the community has for schools. Thus, schools will change, and whether that change is planned and managed or simply left to chance, the school will be shaped by the events that surround it. Attention given to providing for an orderly change will yield enormous benefits in ensuring that changes are not damaging, disruptive, or threatening to the people who work and learn in the school.

Planning for a school or districtwide change is one of the most challenging tasks that any educational leader is likely to face. Nowhere are all the forces of change manifested more dramatically and the need for planned change more obvious than in the reorganization of a school system to provide a special program for young adolescent learners in the middle level school.

Whether the focus of the change is to actually reorganize grade level configurations (from a 7-9 to a 6-8, for example), or to make a transition from a traditionally secondary-oriented approach to a middle level educational environment, the problems are similar: people must give up comfortable, well-established practices in order to adopt new ways of doing things, some of which may be quite different and threatening.

When challenged to move the sixth grade into the middle level school, move the ninth grade into the high school, and make the organizational, program, and staff adjustments necessary for all changes to occur smoothly, the Ann Arbor, Mich., public schools launched a planning process that, because of both its flexibility and its attention to the complexities involved, serves as a model for other districts or schools attempting any type of reorganization. This book is an explanation of that planning model and process. In addition, by drawing examples from the Ann Arbor experience, the book also serves as a case study of how the change process was applied to a particular district.

What makes this work useful to other educational leaders is an explanation of how one district applied a systematic change approach that was strongly rooted in both the theory and research on change and change techniques. It presents both theory and examples. It illustrates both the successes and problems, and it offers some observations about the way in which schools change—not in a smooth linear fashion, but with all the bumps, starts, and stops that are common to any human endeavor.

—R.W.
—J.H.J.

1.

Context for Change

Our society is characterized by ever-increasing change. The students graduating from our schools in the next century will come from a world sharply different from the world that shaped the beliefs and assumptions of the adults who work in these schools. These students will enter a world marked by profound economic, demographic, and social change.

Schools are increasingly asked to assume a greater responsibility for addressing the need for our students to adapt to—and indeed thrive in—this climate of change. In order to be successful in this endeavor, the very essence of our schools must be examined, refined, and in some cases substantially altered.

Changing the Way We Do Things Around Here

Most cultures resist change. In fact, we have a multitude of epigrams to describe the desirability of maintaining the status quo, including "Let sleeping dogs lie"; and "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." School cultures are no exception. There is great comfort in knowing the culture and how to act in it; as Marvin Bower puts it in his succinct but powerful definition of culture, knowing how "we do things around here."

Sometimes, though, the sleeping dog is comatose, and it *is* broke, but we haven't used it in so long that we don't know it. In that case, the administrator may be advocating a change that has little motivational currency for the people in the schools. Such is often the case in moving from one type of instructional organization to another. A leader must suggest that things are not as good as we think they are, and we should change the way we do things around here. Advancing either of these ideas in too heavy-handed a fashion is not likely to help the innovator win any popularity contests in the district.

The discrepancy that exists between the *actual* state of affairs and what people consider to be the *ideal* state of affairs arouses a need to change. In order to strengthen the need to change the system the school change agent must make individuals in the system either see things as they are, or as they could be.

The Strength of Needs

A need usually can be defined by asking a fairly straightforward question: Does a

problem exist that is (1) treated unsuccessfully, or (2) currently ignored, and (3) in sufficient degree to merit some kind of intervention or treatment?

If neither of the first two elements nor the third element exist in the perception of the members of the organization, no need to change will be evident to those individuals. However, certain types of events and conditions are more likely to motivate people. External events, such as lawsuits or changes in legislation, tend to have substantially more motivating power than internal events, such as board policies or administrative directives. External influences on schools tend to originate from legally constituted bodies that have broad authority over public affairs. Local decisions, on the other hand, are often associated with the persons making them, so local observers are free to speculate on the motives behind any particular decision.

At the same time, concrete events are more likely to produce a need than are abstract events. A specific ruling by a state education agency, for example, will produce more rapid change than will a set of goals for education released by that same agency. Figure 1 represents a model of need motivation strength for various types of circumstances that affect school organizations.

Events that can be placed in the concrete/external category tend to have the most motivating power, as do those in the concrete/internal category. The conditions that can be described as internal/abstract, such as the goals set by a school principal, tend to have rather low motivational power. So do the more abstract conditions that exist outside the school, such as changing demographics of the community or new types of demands for school graduates.

Thus, it is the job of the leader-innovator to educate the members of the organization in ways that raise the motivational status of conditions that can be construed to call for a change. In other words, the success of any change effort largely depends on how successful the change agent is in linking relatively abstract ideas, such as what a good middle level school should be, to fairly concrete, irrefutable conditions that exist both inside and outside the school.

Two examples of how this can be done are drawn from the authors' recent experiences with school systems.

Motivational Strength of Different Types of Need

	LOCUS OF MOTIVATION	
	EXTERNAL	INTERNAL
CONCRETE	lawsuits regulations	contracts student suicide
	social trends legislation	policies board action
ABSTRACT	new client demands new clients	ideas visions

In one state, school officials were attempting to reduce tracking in a middle school. However, because tracking belonged to that long-standing category of "the way we do things around here," and because the students' overall achievement scores indicated that "nothing was broke," the need to change was not evident to teachers in the school.

Administrators, however, were in a position to note that the tracking system seemed to encourage disruptive behavior and increase disciplinary referrals, as well as produce segregative effects on minority and disadvantaged students.

The motivation to change came, ultimately, from a state law regarding isolation of minority and culturally diverse students. The law specified that students could not spend more than 25 percent of their school day in a racially identifiable grouping, and the practice of tracking greatly exceeded that standard. Thus, the administration was able to link an existing condition that ran contrary to one of their values and made them very uncomfortable (an internal/abstract need) with a state law (concrete/external) that had considerably higher motivational value, and the tracking system was greatly modified.

In a second case, a number of teachers and administrators had argued tirelessly for beginning an adviser-advisee program in their junior high school. A number of their colleagues saw that as a major role shift for teachers and were uncomfortable with the idea. An audit of the school by curriculum specialists identified student anonymity and a rapidly increasing dropout rate as critical problems. These difficulties, sensed rather vaguely by some staff members, were made concrete by the data presented in the audit, and the staff came to see the importance of schoolwide efforts to promote social bonding and an atmosphere of caring in the building.

In a similar situation, counselors saw a growing sense of alienation among a group of students. Tragically, the suicide of a middle school youth made the abstract difficulty of student detachment starkly real. In both cases, an idea perceived by relatively few people was made relevant for all with specific, concrete information and events that underscored local conditions.

Educating the Staff About Needs

Information alone is seldom sufficient to change beliefs and attitudes about a new idea or practice.

In the change process, the innovator must often invest some initial efforts in shaping the attitudes of the people in the organization so that they will attend to and process new information. In the case above, teachers became more receptive to information about alternatives to ability grouping once it was clear that the practice is not always permissible, let alone desirable. In another case, information was presented that created cognitive dissonance in the staff—all was not as it seemed to be—and they moved to alter practices to reduce that dissonance.

In general, there are three methods available to instructional leaders in raising the motivational status of any given need in the school. These approaches conform to three types of learning: cognitive, behavioral, and social.

Cognitive Learning and Attitude Change

One powerful model of attitude change is based on the theories of cognitive scientists, which postulate that new attitudes are learned in essentially the same way all new information is learned: Our existing cognitive structures are altered to accommodate new information or observations of our world. In this case, the job of the innovator is to try to create the conditions that facilitate the learning of new attitudes.

According to cognitivists, human beings are perfectly capable of holding two contradictory beliefs or notions as long as they are not made aware of them. Once they beome aware of those contradictions, cognitive dissonance occurs. Dissonance is the uncomfortable feeling we get when we realize that something we believe to be true is no longer clearly so.

The change agent hopes that dissonance will be reduced by changing behavior in the desirable way, or by altering the belief or attitude so that the individual is more receptive to a new practice. Chances are almost as good, however, that the individual will deny the evidence being presented, particularly if it appears to contradict long-standing beliefs.

In schools, dissonance can be a very useful tool in stimulating change. Often, the dissonance is produced by persuasive communication from an outside consultant or through new information collected in the school. In either case, the information must be convincingly presented, so that the individual will be persuaded by it. After this is achieved, the change agent can point out the apparent contradictions between what the individual has just agreed to and existing school practices.

For example, a consultant may convincingly present information about young adolescent development so that a group of teachers will agree with the observations and conclusions. At that point, it is useful to have the consultant and the teachers identify existing school practices that seem to contradict what is known (and agreed to) about the developmental needs of young adolescents. Once this dissonance has been introduced, the climate is right for discussing changes that can be made in school practices to bring them into greater conformity with what is known about the nature of the learner. That provides an avenue for reducing the dissonance that exists between beliefs and institutional practices.

Similarly, compelling information can be presented by colleagues or other respected sources. Information about adolescent development, presented to a staff and discussed until everyone is in basic agreement with it, can form the basis for making program and organizational changes in the school. In the case described in this book, the Ann Arbor schools assembled a working group that compiled information on young adolescent development. These data are presented as Appendix B. This information, after extensive discussion and ultimate agreement, formed the basis for subsequent recommendations about program changes and standards in the change process.

While it is not possible to change beliefs with information, it is possible to shape attitudes with information that is convincingly presented and that induces a certain amount of cognitive dissonance. From this theoretical orientation, school leaders should be guided to use relatively small amounts of information at strategic times to encourage the formation of desirable attitudes toward school change. Relevant information, provided at just the right time, will have a much more dramatic effect than general information introduced before the individual senses any need for it.

Behavioral Approaches to Attitude Change

Behavioral scientists offer guidance on the reinforcement of desirable attitudes and behaviors associated with school changes. They tell us that behaviors, opinions, and attitudes that are rewarded and reinforced are likely to be repeated and, ultimately, incorporated into our personal value set and behavioral tendencies.

Using this theoretical orientation, school leaders can reinforce the attitudes and behaviors that are positively associated with the school change and fail to reinforce those that are negatively associated with the change. In concrete terms, this can happen

in a variety of ways. Staff members who are favorably disposed toward a change, or those who are undecided but open to information about the innovation, might have that disposition "reinforced" by being sent to a conference on the subject or on a school visit to a district that already uses the innovation. Teachers who want to try something new might be given additional supply money, or a chance to order computer software or other materials related to the innovation. If possible, released time for teachers can be arranged to engage in planning for the innovation or for exploring it further on their own.

In every case, certain principles apply. First, the reinforcement should be fairly specific (ranging from a concrete reward, such as money or released time, to a less tangible one, such as recognition or compliments by other staff members or the administration). Second, the reward must be clearly linked to the desirable behavior or attitude. It is not enough to send teachers to a conference because they supported the administration's efforts in a general way. The change agent must make clear why the teacher is being sent: "You have shown some interest in interdisciplinary teaming, so I'd like you to go the state middle school conference and find out more about it."

The reward should not be given every time the behavior is demonstrated. If a reward is expected for each incidence of the behavior, it comes to be viewed as compensation for the behavior, not as a reward for it. Generally, intermittent rewards are most effective for long-term behavior change.

Finally, the reward must also be seen as desirable. If the principal is not popular with teachers, he or she should not be the one to publicly reward a teacher during a faculty meeting. Such recognition may, in fact, extinguish the desirable behavior, because recognition by the principal may be cause for ostracism by the rest of the faculty.

The judicious use of rewards and reinforcements can not only increase the likelihood that the recognized individual will repeat the desirable behavior, but may serve as an incentive for others to engage in the behavior as well. For this to occur, however, everyone must believe that he or she can earn the reward. If some teachers believe that, no matter what they do, the principal will not recognize their efforts, behavioral approaches to attitude change will not work for that group. The distribution of rewards and reinforcements must always be seen as fair and evenhanded.

Social Approaches to Attitude Change

Social learning theorists believe that attitudes and behaviors are learned by the individual's continuous, reciprocal interactions with the social world in which he or she lives. Thus, attitudes, beliefs, values, and their attendant behaviors tend to be learned from others in the individual's social world.

To a large degree, acceptance in a group depends upon accepting that group's norms and behavior patterns. Because of an intense human need for both acceptance and membership, most of us are willing to conform quite a bit, even if we are somewhat uncomfortable doing so, in order to preserve our membership in the group.

The extent to which we accept the norms of the group depend on the strength of our desire to be a member of it. In fact, it is this sense of belonging that determines whether or not we will attempt to police the behavior of other group members. If someone feels very secure as a member of a group, he or she is more likely to exert influence on the behavior of other group members. This intervention, while perhaps uncomfortable, is viewed by other group members as completely legitimate.

In the school change process, social approaches to attitude formation and change can

be very powerful. The extent to which the new attitude or the new behavior can be accepted as a social norm for the group will determine both its longevity and its influence. If the group members accept the new idea as a norm, they will actively influence each other, rewarding expressions of the new attitude and, perhaps, punishing unacceptable attitude statements.

In general, within the social change model, attitudes and behaviors are shaped by two powerful processes: modeling and consensus. Modeling occurs when a respected member of the group exhibits a behavior or attitude that other group members, because of the model's status and their desire for membership, emulate. Generally, the ability of an individual to serve as a model depends on his or her status with the group and upon the cohesiveness of the group as a whole.

The status of the model is important because members tend to imitate individuals with the highest status in the group. Therefore, if respected, veteran teachers advocate a change, they will be more likely to influence the rest of the group's attitudes. For school leaders, this means that it is essential to cultivate the cooperation of those respected staff members to support an innovation. By using the other methods (cognitive and behavioral), or by encouraging a high-status staff member to model after another veteran, the innovator can recruit a powerful ally in the change process.

The change will become permanent in the group if there is a high degree of cohesiveness, the characteristic that defines the extent to which individuals wish to be members of the group. In highly cohesive groups, changes tend to be readily accepted, and the members tend to conform to the new norm. In less cohesive groups, there is no particular motivation to be accepted as a group member, so there is less need for conformity.

Furthermore, cohesiveness tends to be a function of how the group was constituted. Groups with voluntary membership tend to be very highly cohesive; required membership groups less so. This suggests that, in its initial phases, an innovation is likely to be sustained best by a group that has voluntarily constituted itself for the purpose of trying it. In addition, allowing one voluntary group (whether it is a team, an informal group of teachers, or an entire faculty) to try an innovation helps to ensure both the success of the innovation and the potential for using that group as a model for other staff groups in the school or district.

In the Ann Arbor change project, groups were constituted from among the most respected members of the school community to address each of the critical issues in the conversion process. The purpose of the group composition was not to avoid controversy, but to allow the most influential people in the system to work out acceptable positions, which they could then advocate among their colleagues and peers. To a large extent, the success of any project relies upon the ability and willingness of the participants in its design to promote the new idea, attitude, or innovation among those who respect them.

Social change models also rely heavily upon consensus. Once a group has agreed on a vision, goal, or practice, it is very tenacious. Therefore, it is critical that change agents make use of consensus-building to influence the attitudes of the affected groups.

Group consensus is a process in which all members understand the issue under deliberation, everyone has a chance to express an opinion about the issue, and those who continue to doubt the decision understand it and are willing to try it for a prescribed period without sabotaging it (Schmuck and Runkel, 1985). Consensus differs from a unanimous decision because not everyone necessarily agrees with it. However,

they agree to go along with the group and not interfere with the practice for a while.

In building consensus, several principles are critical. First, it is easier to achieve consensus on broad statements than on specific ones. Second, everyone must participate in expressing opinions about the innovation. This helps to prevent the tyranny of the minority, in which a small number of people, without ever participating in the process, sabotage a project. Failure to ensure that all issues, concerns, and reservations are brought to light can result in hidden resentments and resistance that can impede the innovation's progress. Finally, there must be safeguards against having the minority bullied by a larger group; some redress mechanism must be in place.

In Ann Arbor, agreement was sought first on a broad mission statement for the district and the middle level schools, then on a set of program goals for all middle level schools in the district. Because of the size of the district and the diversity of the community, both a deliberative group (a middle level steering committee) and a legally constituted group (the board of education) were involved in the process. The process itself was overseen by the district's management team. This ensured that all the district's interests were represented in the deliberations and that competing interests and conflicting agendas could be brought to light and resolved.

Once agreement on the mission and goals was secured, the deliberative body worked to develop program standards for the five Ann Arbor schools. These standards were to reflect the district's agreed-upon mission, its goals, and its knowledge of the clients and how they learn. The standards were deliberated and drafted first by experts in each area (curriculum, facilities, etc.), then presented to the deliberative body and, through them, to the entire faculty and staff, before being adopted.

Once the standards were adopted by the district, they were studied in detail by the staff of each school. Individual school plans were then proposed to show how each of the schools would meet the district's standards. These were reviewed by the deliberative body for adherence to the mission and goals of the district, and by the administrative staff to ensure necessary legal and fiscal compliance. Once approved, it became the responsibility of each school to install the new practices they had agreed upon and monitor their effectiveness.

Throughout this entire process, the groups were given time, materials, consultants, and support staff as necessary. As the schools developed their own plans, they were supported in similar ways. Individuals who simply could not live with the group's decisions were permitted to opt into other types of assignments.

All this describes a process that allows a group to negotiate a new set of norms for their own behavior. Consensus-building produces changes that are relatively permanent because of the reciprocal negotiations among interested groups that continuously take place. At its best, this is the most potent form of attitude change strategy for innovation and school change.

Systematic attention to the ways in which individuals form and alter their beliefs and attitudes provides important insights for educational leaders who would mount any kind of change effort. Imposing a change, no matter how desirable it may appear to be, violates all the conventional dictates of collaborative management. At the same time, failing to exert any leadership toward desirable ends produces institutional chaos.

In order for such a change program to be effective, however, school leaders must understand that schools, not districts, form the "community" in which norms, social roles, and traditions determine the behavior of people in the building. Therefore, although it may be organized centrally and supported by central office resources, the

change effort itself must focus on the school level. Therefore, site-based management and planning are essential components of any change effort, no matter how pervasive or systemic the change is expected to be.

Effective educational leaders must introduce ideas and visions of what can be. They can encourage and support meaningful discussion of alternative approaches to these goals, and, working with the school's stakeholders, shape a change process that produces beneficial results without either smothering opposition or creating unproductive dissonance. The experience in Ann Arbor demonstrates that a carefully planned and managed change process benefits the entire community and creates a productive spirit of ownership and collaboration within each school setting.

Social and Economic Context

In order to better understand the context of change, it will be helpful to review three areas in which the very fabric of our society has been altered: our economic system, the demographics of our society, and family structure.

Structure of the Economy

The economy of the 1990s will barely resemble the economy of the recent past. Since its inception, our nation has been dominated by agriculture and manufacturing. As we move into the next century, the United States will finalize its move away from an industrial society to one that is information-based. This adjustment to a new economic structure has not been easy and is not yet complete.

For example, between 1947 and 1973, the average family income in the United States more than doubled. We became accustomed to steady increases in purchasing power. This changed dramatically beginning in the 1970s. From 1973 to 1986 the average family income declined by $262.

Still another indicator of economic change is reflected in the poverty rate. Those rates declined steadily from 1959 until 1973. From that date until 1986 the rate consistently increased. It is estimated that in 1989 one of every four children lived in poverty, and one of every two black children met that criteron.

In 1973, 14 percent of the black male high school dropouts reported no earnings at all. By 1984, 43 percent made the same report. Among all males aged 20 to 24, 42 percent did not earn enough to support a family of three above the poverty level.

These statistics indicate that all Americans are not benefiting from the economic transformation taking place in this country. The Department of Commerce reported that in 1986, 40 percent of the population earned only 15 percent of the income. The economic stability of this nation is increasingly at risk.

These reports of increased poverty mask a major shift in the structure of our economy. The tradition in our society has been to have a high literacy track drawn primarily from the upper classes. This group was trained to reason, communicate, and engage in math and scientific thought. In the workplace, this well-educated minority assumed the few leadership positions needing these skills.

As we move into the 1990s, the workplace is changing dramatically. Our economy is increasingly dependent on the wide-scale use of higher order thinking skills. This shift will require a transformation in our educational system in order to ensure that all students acquire these skills. It is imperative that we be more successful, not with 10 or

20 percent of our students, but with all children. Our economic viability can no longer tolerate disposable children.

Another dominant theme of the next century will be that of cooperation. The American workplace increasingly stresses the themes of cooperation and teamwork.

Chrysler Corporation has modified its organizational structure to provide for the integration of the design function with engineering, marketing, and sales. In the past, each function was separate and seemingly unrelated to the others. In the new structure, each division works collaboratively with the others in preparing for the introduction and manufacture of a new product.

In Dallas, American Airlines' largest hub, the airline has posted a large sign outside its terminal facing the ramp. This sign can be seen by each employee servicing one of the airline's planes. The sign reads "Cooperation, Communication, Self-Respect, Trust." American Airlines has also authorized ticket agents to handle almost any customer problem without calling a supervisor. A supervisor is called only when the employee must say "no." The airline has given its employees awesome power.

These two examples characterize the changing nature of the American workplace. Greater numbers of employees are required to have higher order thinking skills. All employees must be able to work cooperatively with other employees and to assume greater responsibility for decision making in the workplace.

Demographics of Our Society

At the same time the structure of our economy is changing, the demographics of our nation continue to shift. As we approach the next century, this shift will affect our schools dramatically.

- We will be an increasingly older nation with an ethnic and racial diversity greater than any time in our history.
- White males will be a minority of the labor force, and two-income households will be the norm.
- One of every three citizens will be a minority.
- The aging of our population will result in a shortage of new workers entering the workplace.
- More than half the young people entering the work force between now and the year 2000 will be black, Hispanic, or Asian.
- Almost two-thirds of the new workers will be women. By the year 2000, 60 percent of women of working age are expected to hold paying jobs.

Thirty-five years ago there were 17 workers for every 1 worker who was retired. Today those figues stand at 3 1/2 workers for every retiree. By the year 2000 that number will drop to 2 workers for every person retired. As the population ages, the productivity of those remaining in the workplace will have to increase dramatically in order to maintain the standard of living to which we have all grown accustomed. As the nation becomes more ethnically diverse, our schools must do a much better job with those who have traditionally been most unsuccessful in our classrooms.

We can no longer simply provide the opportunity for youngsters and then turn our backs if the opportunity is not seized. Everyone loses if students are not successful. The schools must take leadership in developing in our young people the requisite attitudes and skills that will ensure their own success and that of society.

Family Structure

The era of the traditional American family—with father working outside the home, mother managing the home, and two or more children—has passed. By 1988 this description fit only 3 percent of American families. In the mid-1950s that figure stood at nearly 60 percent.

Several factors account for this restructuring. The divorce rate has increased significantly. More women are choosing to seek employment outside the home. An increasing number of couples are choosing not to have children or to have fewer than couples in the past.

In the United States today, one of every two marriages ends in divorce. Divorce has an important social and economic impact on women. In most cases, they assume the responsibility for supporting the children. As a result, the disposable income for women following divorce falls nearly 73 percent. This affects the economic viability of the family and accounts for a new economic reality for the children in the home.

This century has seen a dramatic increase in the number of women who work outside the home. Today 53 percent of all women work outside the home, compared to 20 percent in 1900. An equally startling statistic describes the percentage of women in the work force who have children. In 1940, 8.6 percent of the work force was composed of women with a child under the age of 18. By 1987, 64.7 percent of the work force was women, half with a child under the age of one. These figures help to account for the new structure of the American family.

Family patterns are also diversifying. Statistics from 1986 indicate that 26 million couples are childless, compared to 24 million married couples with children. Also represented in the American family patterns are 10 million single-parent families and 20 million individuals living alone.

This restructuring of the American family has a significant impact on the schools. As children arrive in our classrooms from these settings, our school program must be prepared to address their individual needs and provide a quality educational experience. The dilemma is that the staff member who will greet these students were raised in family structures vastly different from those of the students. This dissonance must be addressed as the schools prepare for the next century.

Implications for Change

The implications of these changes are profound for every institution of our society, but particularly for our schools, which will continue to shoulder the primary responsibility for preparing our young people to work and live in this changing society. Therefore, the impact on the educational system is immense. Across the nation, every school district will be required to review its current fuctioning, examine the demographic trends of the community, and plan for modifying its current program in order to meet the needs of our society in the next century.

Even as educators become more accepting of the changing structure of our society, and openly discuss the effects of altered demographics on the educational system, the schools continue to function in a political environment that longs for the past. We want a nation of strong patriotic beliefs, of core social values endorsed by all, of a basic educational program encompassing rigorous academic requirements and higher standards for graduation. Such an environment often makes it difficult for school officials to modify programs in order to better address the needs of students. Nevertheless, the task must be undertaken.

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COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

A school district must approach the change process in a thoughtful and deliberative manner. Planning is a process that requires the commitment of an enormous amount of time and resources. Those resources are for the most part human—those participating in the planning and implementation of change. Every element of the planning process must be consistently reviewed in light of its impact on those involved.

FIRST STEPS

Perhaps the most critical step in initiating school district planning is the creation of a "plan to plan." Before any preliminary recommendations can be considered, three important initial steps must be taken: the identification of key constituent groups; a review of effective practices, both within the district and external to it; and the gathering of information from these key constituent groups. A planning checklist is provided in Appendix A.

Constituent Groups

The management of a public school system is a complex activity. Decision making is often widely dispersed among many schools and numerous administrators and teachers. While the board of education is the official governing body, a program is implemented by hundreds of individual employees throughout the district.

In addition to these district employees, every community is composed of a significant number of constituent groups. The identification of these key groups is one of the most critical of the initial planning steps. Obvious stakeholders include staff, parents, and students. Other groups such as senior citizens, religious leaders, business leaders, union officials, citizens without children in the schools, and other special interest groups have a significant role in the support of our educational systems. Formally and informally, they have a profound impact on the operation of our schools. These groups should not be ignored if the district wants to maintain a high level of community support.

While these groups may not be involved in the day-to-day operation of the schools, each has a vested interest in their success. Senior citizens may advocate prudent use of the district's financial resources and physical plant, while business leaders may endorse programs that better prepare youngsters for functioning in the world of work. The

interests of each constituent group must be identified and considered when preparing for school district planning.

These key groups should then be brought into the planning process. Representatives of each group should be asked to assist with program planning. Each group should be provided with information and data regarding the change process, as well as the objectives of the change. Acknowledging each constituent group and keeping them informed will provide the groups with a common base of information and understanding of the change being proposed for the school system.

Effective Practices

A second important step is to identify practices that have been effective in addressing the topic under review. Several activities that might aid this process include a review of recent research on effective practices, contacts with other school districts regarding the topic, and the identification of effective current local practices. Professional organizations such as the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), and the National Middle School Association (NMSA) are helpful in locating resources. The addresses for these and other organizations are included as Appendix M.

This external review should also include an analysis of trends regarding the topic. Current research should be located and studied. Articles written in professional journals should be identified, read, and synthesized. A look at practices in other districts at both the state and national levels should be included. Following these activities, the information should be made available for use by the various planning committees.

An equally important task is to identify effective practices currently in place in the district. This may be accomplished through surveys or by reviewing local assessment measures. This is a critical step in planning. It symbolizes a desire to retain effective practices while enhancing them with new activities that reflect the current literature and practices of other districts. During the early stages of restructuring a district, it is important to assure constituents that the best of the past will be blended with the newly adopted program.

As the Ann Arbor district prepared for planning its middle school program, each of these activities took place. The National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Middle School Association were helpful in directing the district to recent research on effective middle school practices, and in identifying school districts similar to Ann Arbor that have implemented the middle school concept.

A state level professional organization will also often prove helpful in locating school districts nearby that have addressed similar issues. Another resource that might be developed is a list of districts of similar size and demographics throughout the nation. The Office of Instruction in each district would then be queried about how they have dealt with the issue.

Clarifying the Issues

It is very helpful to clarify the issues related to the change. The development and administration of a series of surveys will identify what issues are important to each constituent group. The Ann Arbor district adapted a questionnaire regarding general concepts of middle level education from another district and used it with staff and

parents. The survey asked staff and parents to respond to several statements about middle level education. Respondents rated each item from "very important" to "not important at all." Examples of the items were:.

- Each student should have at least one teacher who knows him/her well.
- The middle level program should be characterized by instruction that highlights cooperation rather than competition.

Rather than ask for support of the middle level concept, respondents were asked to indicate support for key ideas. A copy of the parent survey is included as Appendix D.

A survey given to students who were making the transition into the middle level asked them to express their concern about 30 items such as being different from others, changing clothes in front of others in physical education, and failure. These data allowed the schools to target transition programs and planning on issues that were important to students. For example, the Ann Arbor district discovered that the major item of concern for students was the fear of failure. Concerns about the lunchroom, buses, and lockers were minor. Previous transition programs had focused primarily on the latter items, items that were not considered important by the students. By redirecting our efforts at supporting students during the transition, we were better able to address their real concerns. A copy of the student survey is included as Appendix E.

Each survey was structured to identify the issues that were important to that group. The primary goal of the surveys was to gain an overall picture of how well the system was performing at the middle level and to identify the depth of support for key middle school components. The use of such surveys will assist in identifying strengths, weaknesses, and critical issues that must be addressed throughout the program planning process.

Surprisingly, while the staff survey revealed displeasure with the middle school concept, there was strong support for implementing programs that would address the needs of early adolescents. In fact, many of the suggestions supported by the staff were in agreement with the growing body of research regarding effective middle school practices.

For example, more than 76 percent of the staff felt it was very important that each student should have at least one teacher who knows him/her well. More than 63 percent of the staff believed that a team of teachers should plan and implement the basic instructional program for a given group of students.

While the survey results showed less than unanimous support for each of the issues, they did indicate that there was substantial support among the staff for the major middle level concepts. Further analysis showed that, while there might be disagreement on exactly how to implement each idea, there was agreement for the need to include the concept in the middle school program.

The survey results helped to clarify the issues that were important to the staff. Both prior to the initiation of middle school planning and throughout the process, opponents of the program insisted that the staff did not support the key program components: teaming, small houses, and an advisory program. The results of the survey showed that this was not accurate and helped to reassure the planning committee.

It was important to know the key issues and the degree of support or concern for each. While the Ann Arbor staff might not support reorganizing the middle schools, there was support for the implementation of programs appropriate to middle level students. This information would help guide subsequent program planning.

Once the initial preparation for school district change has been accomplished, the

organization of the planning process must be finalized. This is one of the most important planning steps and affects every aspect of school reorganization. It is essential to develop a planning process that provides for broad constituent participation, fosters wide acceptance of the goals of the reorganization, and provides a common sense of direction. This process is based on the assumption that planning collaboratively with key constituents will result in not only a better plan, but a more widely accepted plan. Such ownership is critical to the successful implementation of any planning effort.

Collaborative planning involves several essential features: participation of key constituent groups, development of a planning calendar and timeline, creation and use of a mission statement, establishment of a process for developing the components of the school program, providing clarification regarding district versus school level decision making, and maintaining open communication with all constituent groups, particularly the various employee groups.

Constituent Participation

It is important that the planning process provide for the active involvement of each of the identified constituent groups. While most members of the groups will not be able to participate actively in the planning, representatives of each group should be included. Such participation is essential to the success of the overall planning effort.

Participation can take many forms: serving on committees, reviewing documents, assisting with the development of materials, contributing to staff development, etc. Every constituent group need not be involved in every planning activity, or be involved in exactly the same way.

Committee Membership

Planning committees should be composed of representatives from the various constituent groups: parents, teachers, support staff, bargaining units, community members, and dissenters.

The inclusion of dissenters is often overlooked in the desire to reach agreement on a planning issue. However, experience has repeatedly shown that those who are not in agreement with a proposed direction will find numerous ways to affect the decision-making process at all stages of planning. Petitions, letters to the local newspaper, gossip at neighborhood parties and school functions, and many other forms of overt and covert resistance are often used.

One way to deal with these dissenters is to ensure their inclusion in the planning process. It is often advantageous to address their concerns in the normal course of the planning effort.

Involvement of dissenters also demonstrates the openness of the planning process, allows all issues to be openly discussed as part of the planning, and provides an opportunity to persuade the dissenters of the merits of the proposal. A particularly powerful message to the community is the endorsement of a district initiative by a previously identified dissenter.

Participation vs. Representation

The issue of representation should be addressed when using a participative process.

Often, two issues are raised to challenge the process. First, individual members of the constituent groups will insist that the selected representatives do not represent their views. The second issue is the selection of committee members.

Membership selection is readily resolved. Each member appointed to a planning committee should be selected by his or her constituent group. Bargaining unit leaders should appoint members representing their group. The PTO president should select representatives of the parents. Appointments made in this manner lessen the likelihood that the composition of the committee will be viewed as predisposed toward a particular course of action.

The second issue is more fundamental and more difficult to address. The issue is one of "participation vs. representation." It is important that, throughout the planning process, representatives be asked, encouraged, and expected to keep their constituent groups informed of the issues and the progress in addressing them. Members should also be encouraged to check with their groups regarding their views on these same issues.

Representation for every individual and every point of view is difficult to achieve. However, a good faith effort that provides for and encourages constituent participation is critical to the success of school district planning.

A note of caution must, however, be made at this point. During the process of planning together and making major decisions regarding school district change, there is a time when each constituent group must put aside their individual issues and points of view in order to reach agreement on a common direction. Such consensus building is an integral part of the problem-solving process. Representation of individual constituent issues cannot be allowed to stand in the way of achieving agreement and moving ahead.

Building consensus is a process that requires a great deal of time and energy. It frequently produces innovative, creative, and quality decisions. To reach consensus the participants must be committed to implement the decision. Consensus building also enhances the confidence of groups in their own ability to resolve difficult issues. Every planning group will develop its own repertoire of activities that facilitate consensus building. Examples are brainstorming and nominal group process.

One example of a planning structure is that utilized for implementation of middle schools in Ann Arbor. It is shown on page 17. This chart demonstrates that the planning process was coordinated at the district level by a steering committee, to which five subcommittees with specific functions reported. This committee structure was developed by the initial planning committee composed of parents, teachers, and administrators. It represents the areas those constituent groups believed were most in need of careful planning. In addition, each school had a planning committee, the School Transition Committee, which was composed of students, parents, and staff.

Participation in and of itself is not the answer to all problems related to school district reorganization. It is a strategy, however, that can promote broad-based community ownership and acceptance of change, and provide for a more thoughtful product.

Clear Task and Timeline

When initiating a collaborative planning process, there are several steps that should be taken to ensure a successful outcome. First, planning committees must be given a clearly defined, manageable task. Second, this task must be accompanied by a timeline

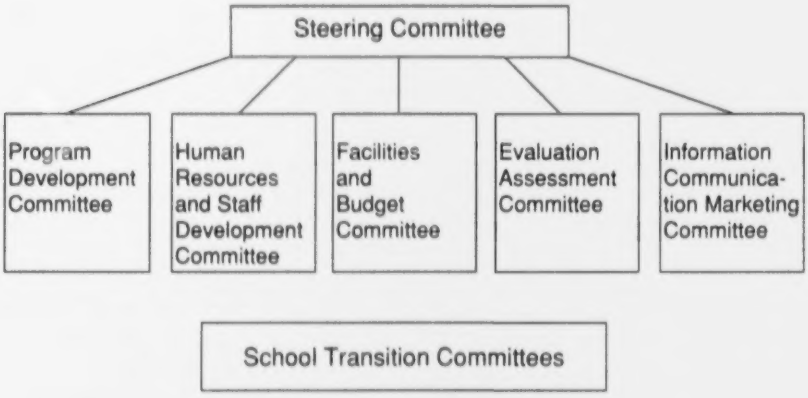
that specifies the parameters for completion of the task. Third, a clearly articulated reporting relationship, which includes a description of how the committee's recommendations will be used, must be identified.

These steps should not be overlooked. Specifying the area or issue to be addressed and the timeline for doing so is essential to the success of collaborative planning. Imagine the dismay when a planning committee has labored many weeks and makes recommendations, only to discover that they have focused on the wrong area or have neglected some major component. For example, asking a committee to develop a middle school program will point them in a general direction. However, asking for recommendations regarding administrative structure, guidance programs, and interdisciplinary team teaching by February will provide a clearer picture of the task and timeline. This specificity allows the committee to focus its efforts and plan the use of its time.

Also essential to the success of collaborative planning is the articulation of an understanding regarding the use of the committee's work. In most districts the work of a committee is just the preliminary step of program implementation. At a minimum the superintendent and board of education will review and refine recommendations. What is critical is that the planning group not be misled as to the next step following their work. Clarification at this early stage will reduce future misunderstandings.

Ann Arbor began its middle school planning process by convening a steering committee consisting of parents, teachers, and administrators. Their initial task was to review a common set of readings regarding middle school students and effective middle level programs, to make recommendations regarding a process for developing and implementing the middle school program, and to write and refine a proposed statement of philosophy for the middle school program.

Middle School Planning Committees


Steering Committee
Program Development Committee
Human Resources and Staff Development Committee
Facilities and Budget Committee
Evaluation Assessment Committee
Information Communica-tion Marketing Committee
School Transition Committees
Student, Parent, Staff (elementary and middle level)

The steering committee recognized that the planning process required the involvement of a broad cross section of interest groups. Therefore, one of the initial recommendations called for more inclusive representation on all planning committees. It was suggested that representatives from other constituencies, such as senior citizens and business groups, be added to the committee. In addition, the steering committee developed the committee structure that would be used for the planning process and defined the task for each subcommittee.

The steering committee also developed an initial planning timeline, which listed the specific activities the group believed were necessary, together with the month in which each should take place. This calendar allowed the planning committees to schedule upcoming steps, assured constituent groups that many of their concerns would be addressed, and conveyed an aura of thoughtful and deliberative planning. The Ann Arbor planning timeline is included as Appendix F.

The initial planning process contained five distinct phases. Each phase consisted of specific activities that, when completed, would lead to the successful implementation of the middle school program. The five phases are described in the chart which begins below. They moved from initially establishing a climate supportive of change and predicated on a common base of information, to more specific planning and implementation steps.

Middle School Planning
Program Development Subcommittee

Membership:	15	teachers (1 each art, business, foreign language, health, home economics, industrial arts, language arts, math, media, music, performing arts, physical education, reading, science, social studies)
	1	pupil personnel
	2	subject area coordinators
	2	administrators (1 elementary, 1 intermediate)
	1	guidance
	1	sports director
	5	parents
	5	teachers (elementary classroom)
	1	Executive Director of Instruction
	1	community member
	1	steering committee member

Charge:

1. To make recommendations to the Steering Committee with regard to the program standards for middle schools in Ann Arbor. These standards should be consistent with and reflect the Ann Arbor Middle Schools Philosophy Statement and Board of Education Policy
2. To report to the steering committee on the status of their planning and activities

Tasks:

1. To develop program standards that address the following areas and offer examples and models individual schools will examine as they develop their own program:

administrative structure
guidance services
curriculum
able learner program
flexible use of time
interdisciplinary team teaching
intramural programs
cocurricular programs

2. To gather information about middle school programs and develop a process for dissemination of this information

3. To develop a timeline for their activities

Timeline: Recommendations to the Steering Committee by February 1, 1988

ADOPTED PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process adopted by the Board of Education in February 1987 and modified in September 1987 has five phases that will result in the implementation of middle schools in September 1989. The five phases are as follows:

PHASE 1:
GATHERING AND DISSEMINATING A COMMON BASE OF INFORMATION REGARDING MIDDLE SCHOOLS (February 1987 - August 1987)

During Phase 1 the administration focused on gathering and disseminating information which provided staff, parents, students, and the community with a common base of information, regarding middle schools in preparation for the development of specific program recommendations during the '87/'88 school year. During the initial stages of Phase 1 the administration worked with an informal advisory group. During the summer of 1987 a summer planning committee of parents, teachers and administrators developed recommendations regarding a middle school philosophy and a planning process.

PHASE 2:
PROGRAM PLANNING—District Standards (September 1987 - March 1988)

This phase focuses on the development of specific recommendations for the creation of middle school programs in Ann Arbor. Specific activities that will occur during this phase include:

- To create a middle school planning committee composed of teachers, parents, and administrators to monitor and coordinate middle school planning
- To develop specific recommendations for middle school program standards for the Ann Arbor district
- To analyze facility needs to implement middle school programs
- To analyze budgetary needs to implement middle school programs
- To provide appropriate staff development opportunities regarding middle school topics
- To gather data regarding the status of middle level education in Ann Arbor
- To identify current board of education policies requiring review

- To initiate planning regarding middle school staffing
- To report to the board of education on the progress of middle school planning.

PHASE 3:
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT—School Based (February 1988 - January 1989)

During this phase of planning the focus will be on the work of the professional staff in each school as they develop school-based programs consistent with the Ann Arbor middle school philosophy and the district middle school standards. Staff development will continue at the school and district level and schools will develop proposals for piloting some aspects of the middle school program during the 1988/89 school year. Activities that would occur during Phase 3 include:

- To review program and budgetary proposals from individual intermediate schools for piloting aspects of the middle school program during the 1988/89 school year
- To monitor the program development work of the professional staff
- To provide appropriate staff development activities
- To finalize tentative middle school staffing
- To finalize middle school administrative structure and staffing
- To implement pilot projects in the intermediate schools
- To establish school transition teams (students, parents, staff) to begin planning for the reorganization
- To prepare and submit budget proposals regarding implementation
- To initiate planning for the reallocation of equipment and supplies
- To finalize plans for facility modifications
- To report to the board of education on the status of middle school planning.

PHASE 4:
INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION—Piloting (September 1988 - May 1989)

This phase of the planning will place emphasis on providing support to the professional staff as they finalize plans and take initial steps in the implementation process. Activities may include:

- To monitor activities associated with piloting new programs
- To monitor the staff development activities intended to prepare the staff for middle schools
- To finalize middle school staffing
- To coordinate and monitor the activities in the initial steps of implementation
- To finalize a process for evaluating middle school programs
- To ensure that schools have developed and implemented activities to smooth the transition to middle schools
- To report to the board of education on the progress of middle school planning.

PHASE 5:
IMPLEMENTATION (June 1989 -)

This phase will focus on the implementation of the middle school program, the monitoring and adjusting of the program, and the evaluation of the program. Activities of this phase might be:

- To monitor the implementation of the middle school program
- To provide appropriate staff development to support the implementation
- To gather data regarding the status of the middle school program in Ann Arbor
- To initiate an evaluation cycle of the middle school program
- To report to the board of education on the implementation process.

The steering committee's early involvement in developing the planning process and defining the tasks was essential to establishing an attitude that encouraged, welcomed, and supported constituent participation in the development of the middle school program.

Yet another critical issue was also resolved in the early stages of planning. This was the decision that each middle school would have discretion in how they implemented the specific components of the program. It was decided that the district would define which components of the program must be in place in every school. The schools would then be able to implement those common components in ways that addressed the unique needs of their school communities and conformed to the agreed-upon program standards of the district.

This key decision, made prior to the development of the program, allowed each school to work with staff, parents, and students to develop and implement a program model that was appropriate for that community. This was a powerful decision that helped create additional ownership of the middle school program. However, such a decision is not without some risk, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Open Communication

An essential activity in establishing a collaborative planning process is to ensure open communication channels with all constituent groups. This can be facilitated by meeting regularly with the leaders of each group. The establishment of a trusting relationship with these key constituents will assist in advancing the program change.

During the Ann Arbor planning process, a meeting with the leaders of the teacher's union was held every two weeks. This provided the opportunity for the leaders to share member concerns, advocate addressing critical issues, and receive information about the planning process. The meetings provided an environment in which trust was developed and confidence was built regarding the planning, confidence that the leaders shared with their members.

However, meetings by themselves do not create open communication. Asking the leadership for information, keeping them informed of problems that arise, and engaging in mutual problem solving are also key ingredients to the communication process. (A discussion of activities that build community support is included in Chapter 3.)

District Planning

Following decisions about constituent participation and the establishment of a planning process, it is essential that the district move in a thoughtful way to make decisions regarding the program to be implemented. Three guiding principles will assist during this next phase of planning.

First, a philosophy or mission statement should be written that reflects the essence of the program to be implemented. The second principle is that some of the essential planning must be conducted at the district level. Examples of this include stating the broad outline of the program, developing the common curriculum components, and allocating resources. The third principle is that many of the most critical decisions must take place at the school level, the point at which the program will be implemented.

The ownership of the decisions and the insights into the individual school will greatly enhance the prospects for successful program implementation.

A Statement of Beliefs

Developing a mission statement is one of the essential early planning activities. "A clear mission helps members of the organization decide on goals, set priorities, and monitor behavior," says NASSP's Council on Middle Level Education in their monograph *Developing a Mission Statement for the Middle Level School.*

Such a statement becomes a vision of the school activity and is the document against which all subsequent planning is measured. It is the vehicle by which the district articulates its purpose, views, and goals for a new program. The mission statement conveys the rationale for the program.

Questions such as "Will the proposed program further the goals of the mission statement?" and "Do the staff development activities promote the priorities set forth in the mission statement?" can be asked and addressed. If the answers are anything but affirmative, the program or staff development session should be modified to conform to the mission statement.

The development of a mission statement should demonstrate the collaborative nature of the planning process. The participation of constituent groups is critical if the statement is to reflect the ownership of these groups. Such ownership is critical if the statement is to be widely accepted and actualized during program implementation. In addition, as the statement is being developed, each constituent group should be encouraged to regularly check with their members in order to ensure more inclusive ownership of the mission statement.

The Ann Arbor district used the district steering committee to define its mission statement. The committee read and discussed a common base of information regarding middle level students, reviewed mission statements developed by similar school districts, and identified the committee's beliefs concerning the essentials of middle level education.

From these activities a draft mission statement was developed. The statement was distributed via a district newsletter to all staff members, and to parents of students in grades K-8. The newsletter included a form on which to critique the statement. Readers were offered the opportunity to comment on the statement and suggest modifications. This method of distribution for the draft mission statement accomplished two things. It reinforced the concept of collaborative planning by demonstrating the intent to draft, refine, and modify key planning documents; and it provided widespread sharing of the committee's beliefs concerning middle level education. This contributed to expanding the common base of information about middle level schools among all constituencies.

As a result of the newsletter survey, more than 200 individuals elected to provide a critique of the mission statement. The responses were tabulated and given to the steering committee. The statement was then refined based on this input and submitted to the board of education for adoption. The Ann Arbor middle school philosophy statement is included as Appendix C.

Following adoption of the mission statement, it was widely distributed throughout the district and has been incorporated in all subsequent planning documents. The Ann Arbor district frequently refers to this statement and uses it to guide decision making at the middle school level. It has been and will continue to be the measure against which all subsequent program planning is gauged.

District Program Standards

Clarifying the specifics of any program is essential in any change process, because it provides structure and definition to the new program. This activity generally takes place early in the planning process and is the point at which many decisions are made that will shape all subsequent planning.

Defining the specifics of the program generally occurs at the district level. One parallel and critical issue is whether every school must implement a program in exactly the same manner. How a district delegates implementation decisions to the individual schools affects the nature of the planning at this step. It demonstrates the district's commitment to collaborative planning and will affect the degree to which the constituent groups choose to invest in subsequent planning activities.

If all decisions are to be made centrally, the development of the district program should involve greater specificity and detail, and should include implementation strategies and steps. However, if program parameters are outlined at the district level and implementation decisions are made at the school level, the district planning effort can be less specific.

Ann Arbor developed a set of district program standards for the middle school program. These standards identified the components of the program that were to be common in all schools. However, each school was empowered to make decisions about how these standards would be implemented.

For example, one standard states that "middle school schedules shall include block-time scheduling as appropriate." Each school determines the structure of its own schedule, the length of the blocks, and whether or not academic and elective blocks can overlap for interdisciplinary instruction. At each school the decision was made following a discussion of the options, and advantages and disadvantages of each. Each plan was chosen to meet the identified needs of that school's staff and students. Permitting these individual scheduling issues to be resolved at the school level has resulted in each school's commitment to the success of its model.

Providing definition to the program is also the point at which the administration may be accused of having already decided on a course of action and selected a program model. Caution is necessary at this stage so that the concepts of constituent participation and adherence to a common sense of direction are maintained.

It is important to continue to model a collaborative planning process in order to counter the charge that decisions have already been made. This requires including representatives of the same constituent groups mentioned earlier, and implementing a planning process that incorporates these groups in this stage of the process.

In order to assist with program development, the planning committee will want to gather information, discuss effective practices, and make recommendations regarding a program model.

All participants must have a common base of knowledge with which to make program recommendations. Establishing this common information base will empower all committee members to actively participate in planning.

Several methods may be used to assist planning committees in establishing this common base of information. Possible methods for gathering the data include surveys, constituent interviews, reviewing recent research, attending conferences, visiting sites, and using consultants.

Surveys—Questionnaires provide the opportunity to gather information from

constituent groups regarding current practices and preferences for program improvement. They identify currently held common ground as well as issues of major disagreement, and allow planning committees to gather input from a large cross section of constituents.

Constituent Interviews—This process utilizes a predetermined set of questions for interviewing individuals or groups. The interviewing process allows for a response that may be more open than when completing a survey. It also allows the interviewer to ask clarifying questions and to assess the personal reaction of the interviewees.

Consultants—Working with a consultant allows a district to capitalize on the consultant's knowledge of current practices and the latest research in a given area. Consultants assist in bringing credibility to a program improvement activity and are able to share examples of effective practices from other districts. In addition, outside consultants can ask obvious questions, make "unbiased" observations, and say things that local staff may not be able to say.

Research Review—Gathering information about current research in a program area, and identifying other districts that have addressed the same issue, helps in defining the task and suggesting alternatives for consideration. Professional organizations and local universities will often assist in identifying appropriate material to review.

National Experts—Separate from the use of an external consultant is the option to utilize the knowledge of nationally recognized experts. Several options for using their skills include on-site visits, phone interviews, and responses to written questions.

Conferences—Attendance at local, state, or national conferences is a good way to gain knowledge of effective middle level practices. Participants can attend sessions and interact with others regarding middle level programs. National conferences that are particularly noteworthy are the middle level sessions of the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the annual meeting of the National Middle School Association.

Site Visits—Learning from practitioners is one of the most effective means of learning about middle level programs. Visiting schools that have implemented middle level programs is one method of achieving this goal. State middle level organizations often maintain lists of schools that welcome visits and are enthusiastic about sharing such information.

The program planning committee must then set about the task of analyzing and synthesizing the material. Many strategies might be used to assist the committee in developing its recommendations. Two such strategies are having subcommittees develop specific portions of the recommendations, or having a small committee draft the recommendations following full committee deliberations.

At this stage it is critical to provide support for the planning groups. This support takes many forms and includes meeting time and clerical assistance.

More than just gathering and sharing a common base of information, there is the need to use, digest, and integrate this information into the planning process. Several strategies can be used to ensure the use of the data. For example, during the deliberations that developed the Ann Arbor Middle School Program Standards, each committee member was provided a handbook containing articles about middle level practices. Subcommittees were asked to read articles, review the information, share it with each other and the larger committee, and then incorporate these readings into their recommendations.

The use of this shared information is critical to the process. However, planned

change is based on more than just research. Thoughtful and collaborative change represents the coming together of research and effective external practices with the experience, practices, and skills of the local school or district. This melding of effective practices from both internal and external sources is the essence of collaborative planning.

Providing time for deliberations and decision making is perhaps the most essential support to be provided. This may necessitate releasing staff from their normal duties, scheduling evening meetings, or a combination of both. These meetings will function better with a comfortable meeting location and refreshments. Something as simple as providing a meal for an evening meeting will often assist in establishing a more positive tone.

Clerical assistance for preparing and disseminating committee recommendations is also necessary. Identify the process for providing this resource early in the planning process.

Time for deliberations is equally important. Too much time can prolong the process and hinder consensus building. Too little time can lead to charges that the recommendations were predetermined. A clearly defined task and a specific timeline will facilitate the development of program recommendations.

A crucial step following the completion of the recommendations is the opportunity for each constituent group to review them and suggest modifications in their structure and content. This review reaffirms the participative nature of the process and allows the final product to be strengthened by the suggestions and modifications that result from such a review. The distribution of the program recommendations to as broad a group as possible will not only provide greater opportunity for participation but will result in a final product that can be more fully supported by the various groups.

Following the opportunity for the constituent groups to review and critique the draft program standards, the planning committee will want to discuss the responses and refine its recommendations. Once this review and refinement are complete, the committee is ready to make its final recommendations. Once the recommendations have been submitted to the board of education and their support received, it is important that the recommendations be widely distributed in order to acquaint the school community with the program being implemented.

The process utilized in the development of the middle school program in Ann Arbor followed a similar process. In October 1987 the steering committee established a program development committee charged with the following responsibility:

> . . . to make recommendations to the steering committee with regard to the program standards for middle schools in Ann Arbor. These standards should be consistent with and reflect the Ann Arbor middle schools philosophy statement and board of education policy.

Specifically, the program development committee was asked to develop program standards in the areas of administrative structure, guidance services, curriculum, able learner program, flexible use of time, interdisciplinary team teaching, intramural programs, and cocurricular programs. In order to focus its work, the committee agreed to define a program standard as "describing an element or practice required in all the district's middle schools."

The committee implemented a three-step process for developing its recommendations regarding Ann Arbor's middle school program: the review of a common base of information and the gathering of information from school district constituent groups, the development of draft program standards, and the review and

refinement of the standards.

Developing a common base of information took several forms. Each committee member was provided with a set of readings on exemplary middle school programs and practices. The committee also reviewed a common base of readings taken from recent literature on middle schools, middle level students, and exemplary middle level programs; discussed the developmental needs of middle level students; and reviewed current board of education policies, including the recently adopted middle school philosophy.

In addition, interviews were conducted with numerous constituent groups such as curricular departments, PTO, elementary administrators, and middle school teachers. The interviews consisted of a series of questions prepared by the planning committee. Each group being interviewed was also provided with a set of readings on middle school topics. Following their review of the readings, the groups were asked to respond to a set of questions. Each group responded to questions unique to their respective department/area, as well as to questions pertaining to the overall program.

For example, every group was asked to respond to questions regarding administrative structure, guidance and counseling, curriculum, instruction, and the activities program. Each group was then asked additional questions that dealt with its unique area. For example, the art department was asked questions regarding the art curriculum and program structure. In this way, every group was able to address some of the major structural issues involved in the middle school program and, at the same time, provide information regarding their own interests.

The second step used in developing program recommendations was the synthesizing of the committee's knowledge and beliefs regarding middle level programs with the results of the constituent interviews. This resulted in a first draft of the program standards and required a thorough discussion of each issue and the exploration of various alternatives. It also required that each constituent group put aside its individual interests in order to reach consensus on the program recommendations.

Once the draft standards were prepared, they were submitted to the various constituent groups for review and comment. Following the receipt of this input the committee refined the standards. The planning committee also identified issues for subsequent resolution, on the basis of its experience and the data gathered from the interviews and from the constituent groups' critiques. An example of such an item was the need for additional staff development and reallocation of books and materials among the schools.

The program planning committee then submitted their recommended program to the district steering committee. The steering committee reviewed each standard, made modifications, and submitted the proposed program to the board of education for its review and adoption. Following the adoption of the program standards by the board of education, the next stage of the planning process began.

Program Development

Once the broad outline of the program has been identified, the specifics of each program component must be developed. Each of the program components must be developed in a way that is consistent with the adopted mission statement and that provides for appropriate participation by the constituent groups.

The development of each specific program element requires the active involvement

of the professional staff. This is the stage where the vision of the program is put into specific detail. For example, as the middle school program was adopted by the board of education, it called for a teacher adviser program. However, the specifics of the advisory curriculum and the structure for delivery of the program were not delineated. Following the adoption of the concept, a committee of teachers and administrators reviewed other advisory programs, discussed the needs of middle level students in Ann Arbor, and then developed the specific objectives and suggested activities for the advisory program.

Each of the program components was addressed in a similar manner. The consistent involvement of staff and parents throughout each stage of program planning has ensured acceptance and support for the program.

Piloting

One concern frequently voiced about any new program is the lack of data concerning whether the proposed alternative will actually address the initial concern. In other words, will it work? To deal with this issue, an important planning step is to provide an opportunity for the program or component to be piloted. Pilots can be useful for several reasons. First, they allow a school district to gain insights into the actual operation of a program. Second, they provide the opportunity for a district to modify and refine a program prior to its implementation. In addition, pilots provide the chance to encourage the professional staff to engage in some risk taking regarding their instructional practices. Often such risks will not be attempted if a program is being fully and permanently implemented.

The most important part of any pilot is to monitor its effectiveness and to make adjustments in the program based on that evaluation. While this step seems quite obvious, it is often overlooked. Frequently, pilots become permanent programs without an assessment of their effectiveness or without necessary and appropriate modifications. An example of a pilot evaluation form is included as Appendix H. Adjusting programs as a result of information learned during a pilot is a practice to be encouraged and demonstrates a concern for implementing effective practices that have results with students.

School-Based Planning

Planning at the local school level is another of the critical steps in implementing any school district change. Despite any amount of planning at the district level, it is still the teachers and administrators in each school who must implement the modified program. The involvement and support of these staff members is essential to the success of every endeavor.

Decisions at the School Level

Permitting and encouraging local schools to make decisions about the implementation of a new program can greatly enhance the effectiveness of any progam. This allows each staff to take into account the unique characteristics and needs of its community as they implement the program.

Several activities must take place to support this school level planning. Decisions

that are to be made at the school level should be determined. Schools must be provided with the human and financial resources to support this planning, and program models should be identified and shared.

When schools are empowered to make decisions regarding program implementation, these decisions must be monitored to ensure that the intent of the adopted program is met and that the program implementation actualizes the district's adopted mission statement. In other words, a school cannot choose not to implement a district program.

The board of education in Ann Arbor adopted a district program standard that stated "so that students and staff can learn and work in a personalized environment, there shall be an administrative plan for each middle school which provides for small administrative/teaching units." This standard means that all schools will have small units or houses. However, each school may decide the organization of the house structure that is most appropriate for its setting.

As a result, in the five Ann Arbor middle schools, there are four different house structures. Each model was selected based upon an analysis of advantages and disadvantages. As a result of this school-based planning, each model has the support of the staff that made the decision. Each staff is committed to ensuring the success of its model. They have a vested interest in that success.

Another program standard states that "all students shall be taught in the areas of math, science, language arts, and social studies by an interdisciplinary team of two to four teachers." Organizing instruction around interdisciplinary teams is not optional. However, each school was empowered to select a team structure that was appropriate for their setting.

As a result, there are two, three, and four-person teams. In some schools sixth graders are taught only by two-person teams. In other settings the special education staff is part of the team. Again, no particular model was imposed on all schools. The staff made the decision following thoughtful discussion and analysis. The result is a greater likelihood that these models will be successful because the staff has significant ownership of the decision and the commitment to make it work.

Planning Concerns

Groups as well as individuals will raise numerous concerns with school-based planning. The concern to surface most quickly may come from district administrators and school board members. Their concern often has to do with maintaining "quality control" over the district. Board members are concerned about the need to offer all students the same educational program regardless of the school they attend. In order to address this concern, a process must be established to monitor school-based planning and to ensure that the district standards are met. The focus must be on outcomes rather than on establishing control over the process.

Staff members will also raise concerns. Allowing local schools to have leeway in how they implement district programs is a relatively new concept. Both teachers and administrators will await the arrival of the "district plan." In fact, many staff members are sure that school-based planning is a charade and will only be complete when the staff somehow selects the model that the district administrators wanted to implement all along.

This is a variation on the idea that someone in the central office has all the answers and will keep them hidden, revealing them only after the staff has devoted substantial

time and energy to the planning process.

Empowering the school staff to make decisions can raise yet another concern from staff. That is the issue of responsibility. It is easy to criticize things you have not been involved in developing. However, the process of giving schools the responsibility to develop plans and select various implementation models lessens the ability of that school's staff to criticize the outcome. The key word is responsibility. Responsibility can be invigorating and empowering to some staff members and frightening and intimidating to others.

If a district elects to allow local schools discretion to implement certain programs, the district must be willing to abide by their decisions and live with the results. The easiest way to stymie school-based planning is for every decision to be second-guessed at the central office. While there must be monitoring of the planning process, schools must be truly empowered to be innovative in their planning and encouraged to develop responsible alternatives.

In order to address the issue of "quality control," the district will want to have clearly defined criteria by which to evaluate the effectiveness of the program model selected for implementation. Establishing a regular cycle for program evaluation, review, and modification will provide the opportunity to revisit decisions and ensure that they have addressed their intended purposes.

One final note about school-based planning: Schools must be allowed to fail. All decisions, whether made at the district level or at the school and classroom level, will not be successful. There should be no penalty for being unsuccessful. Concern should be raised only if a school is unwilling or unable to measure their program's effectiveness and make appropriate modifications based upon the outcome of that evaluation.

Resources for School-Based Planning

If school-based planning is to be successful, appropriate support must be provided. One of the most crucial supports is to have a clear understanding of which decisions a school will be empowered to make. This necessitates a clearly articulated list of school-based decisions.

An example of such a list of areas for school-based decision making is included as Appendix L. This example is from the Ann Arbor middle school experience and clearly indicates whether a decision is to be made at the school level or at the district level, or if the decision making is to be shared. Such an outline is important because it will assist a school in discussing only issues about which they are empowered to make decisions.

In addition to identifying which decisions a school is empowered to make, it is also important to clarify any parameters that must be observed during the planning process. Such parameters may include limits on staffing or dollars, requirements for participation of key constituent groups, or timelines that must be met. All districts will have such parameters. What is critical is that they be clearly articulated prior to the initiation of the planning process.

Schools must have the human and financial resources with which to accomplish the planning tasks. Educators are known for working beyond the established work day and contributing countless hours to school activities. However, all who have participated in late afternoon meetings know that such meetings often are not very productive.

Attention to human resource needs is crucial in supporting the planning process.

The human resource needs include many different components: time for planning, staff development opportunities, and the money to provide materials for each of these activities.

Time for Planning

Time is a crucial factor. If staff members are expected to donate time beyond the regular work day, many will approach school-based planning with less than overwhelming enthusiasm. At the same time, school districts often do not have the ability to modify school calendars or work days, or provide teacher compensation to support such activities.

Nevertheless, arrangements must be made to provide time for the staff to plan together. There are some options available to schools. Many school calendars include scheduled planning or staff development days. At least a portion of any such day might be allocated to school-based planning. The Ann Arbor district has three such days scheduled during the school year. One of these days is scheduled for the end of the school year in June. The staff may, however, choose to change this planning time to a Saturday or two evenings during the school year. Such flexibility allows the staff to adjust the planning time in order to meet the needs of the individual school.

Other options for providing time include releasing students, using staff meeting time, using an advisory group for initial planning, and providing incentives for participating in planning beyond the scheduled day. Every school district has probably developed alternatives that would provide planning time.

During Ann Arbor's middle school planning, each staff was provided 10 opportunities to meet together as a staff for planning purposes. Some of these times were regular meeting times, some student released time, some scheduled planning time at the end of the semester, and some staff meeting time extended until 8:00 p.m.

The extended sessions were voluntary. However, more than 90 percent of the staff participated. Making the sessions voluntary removed a staff concern about being forced to work beyond the scheduled day. Staff incentives were also provided for these extended meetings. Teachers could earn compensatory time to be taken at a later date, or earn dollars to be used for classroom supplies. While neither of these incentives could fully compensate a staff member for his time, they were important symbolic gestures that expressed appreciation for participation in the planning process.

Staff Development

Schools are often asked to alter their method of decision making to be more inclusive and collaborative. The assumption is that the staff—administrators and teachers—have the skills to implement such a model. Often this is not the case. It is imperative that staff members receive training regarding decision making, reaching consensus, and dealing with a variety of working styles. Staff members' inability to deal with such process questions will surely impede their ability to address the important educational questions.

Staff members will also need to become familiar with the components of the program about to be implemented. This will require that sessions be arranged to share this information and provide the necessary training for the staff.

An important ingredient in any staff development plan is to address the issues that staff members feel are crucial, and to provide the sessions for those people interested in participating. This requires two additional activities. First, a survey of the staff will assist in identifying the perceived needs. This will allow the staff development sessions

to be structured appropriately. Second, staff development sessions should be voluntary, if possible. Most staff members will participate eagerly, knowing that they will be involved in implementing the program. However, a certain number will balk at participation. They are less likely to be affected by the content of the sessions and may, in fact, distract the larger group.

Financial Resources

Of course, money to support these planning and staff development activities is critical. After a long teaching day the staff will always welcome refreshments. If the session extends through a meal time, provide a light meal. Also ensure that resources, such as books and materials, are available for each activity. Both district and outside consultants may be used to assist with developing group process skills as well as enhancing content skills.

The Ann Arbor district supported their school-based planning with school-based staff development. A fixed allocation of dollars was provided to each school for this program. The school was able to use these resources to support its planning activities as the staff deemed appropriate. It was another gesture that supported school-based planning, and it reinforced the idea that each school was not required to approach the planning and staff development process in an identical way.

Schools utilized their financial resources in many different ways. School-based workshops were presented by district and outside consultants. Visits to middle school programs, attendance at conferences, and released time for extended planning also were supported. Books, materials, and other items were purchased.

Monitoring

It is also important to establish a process for monitoring school-based planning activities. This will help to address concerns about "quality control," which are often raised when schools have discretion in how they implement programs. This monitoring should be focused in two areas. First, the district must ensure that the planning takes place, and that it meets the district requirements for participation and timeliness. (An example of one format used to monitor program planning is included as Appendix I.)

Second, the school-based decisions must be monitored to ensure that the district's adopted program standards are being followed, and that the integrity of the adopted mission statement is being met. If the parameters for planning have been clearly stated, there should be few if any decisions that might need review. A commitment to school-based planning requires a willingness to accept a variety of models, plans, and implementation strategies. Living with some dissonance demonstrates a commitment to the school-based planning process.

The successful implementation of collaborative planning requires the investment of time, energy, and resources from all parts of the school district. Critical steps include identifying and including key constituent groups in planning, taking steps to ensure the success of the planning groups, developing and using a mission statement, and facilitating school-based decision making.

This investment will provide countless benefits to the district by demonstrating openness to divergent points of view, empowering the staff and community to work collaboratively with the district, and building community support for the schools.

Conclusions

Collaborative planning is a complex process, yet one that responds to several basic principles. The key components in the change process are identifying the need for change, identifying and working with those constituent groups whose involvement in the planning process is essential, developing a clear and specific description of the task and a timeline for completing the task, and clarifying the decisions to be made at the district and school levels.

Two ideas are paramount to successful planning. Perhaps the most important component is the development of a "plan to plan." To charge blindly into the reorganization process is to call for problems. The second critical idea is to acknowledge that successful change requires attention to the human factor throughout the planning. Critical to this effort is a concern for addressing the needs of students, sensitivity to the needs of staff, and a willingness to work cooperatively with all constituencies to develop, refine, and implement the reorganization plan.

Every school district is unique. The demographics, the local economy, and the level of community support are among the many factors that vary from one district to the next. The blend of these unique characteristics results in communities with diverse needs. The guidelines and examples used throughout this chapter were provided to clarify each step in the planning process. They are meant to be adapted in order to meet the individual needs of each school or district.

3.

PLANNED COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The planning and implementation of any program change will evoke a variety of reactions from the school community. There are several options available to the school administrators. They can elect to address the issues that arise, ignore them, or develop a strategy that builds positive community relations.

This chapter will focus on strategies that can be used to ensure that all segments of the school community are informed about the implementation of a new program. Topics include identifying the various audiences to be addressed, assessing the needs of each audience, selecting strategies for keeping them informed, and building positive community relations. The hiring of a professional marketing firm and the development of a marketing plan is also reviewed. A sample communication plan/schedule is provide in Appendix J.

AUDIENCES

Every school district is composed of a variety of constituent groups, often referred to as audiences. These audiences fall into two categories, internal and external. A school district's internal audiences include the professional staff, support staff, and students. Members of the external audiences include parents and various segments of the community, such as senior citizens and business leaders. Each segment comprises a unique constituent group with specific needs for involvement, participation, and information. The needs will vary from group to group.

In addition, each constituent group can be subdivided into many subgroups. For example, the professional staff will be composed of elementary teachers, middle level teachers, high school teachers, and administrators. Not every effort at planning a new program requires strategies for each subgroup. However, the planning process must recognize that in any organization there are multiple constituencies and that many organization members may belong to more than one of these groups.

Assessing Needs

When reviewing the list of audiences it is easy to make some assumptions about their information needs. In many cases these informed guesses may be quite accurate. In other instances, however, they may not identify many of the requirements of each group.

Rather than guessing at the issues, a district can take a more active approach in assessing a group's need for information. A survey will help identify the issues that are agreed upon and supported, and those about which there are questions and concerns. Such an assessment process allows a district to determine and develop strategies for targeting the specific needs of each group.

A variation of this strategy is to conduct random phone interviews of the constituent groups. When using this approach the district should attempt to speak with people representing all points of view, dissenters as well as supporters. Talking with both groups is critical in gathering a balanced perspective on the issues.

A third strategy is to hold public forums where members of each constituent group can raise questions or concerns. During such a forum, a staff person should collect information about the topics being discussed and the constituent groups raising the issues. These data will permit later analysis to determine particular information needs.

During Ann Arbor's middle school planning students, staff, and parents were surveyed. Students were asked to respond to a survey about their concerns in moving to a new school. It asked them to indicate how worried they were about such items as moving from room to room, changing clothes in physical education, and getting along with older students. A sample of the survey is included as Appendix E.

In addition, students were asked to complete a survey stating their preferences for instructional practices. Students rated various teaching strategies, such as "working with other students on a project" and "working on assignments on a ditto sheet." Responses ranged from "very helpful" to "not helpful at all." This survey was used in developing the middle school instructional program.

The results of these two surveys showed that students were not very worried about entering a new school, but they were concerned about failure, drugs, and changing clothes in physical education. Students were also not very concerned about the size of the middle school buildings, moving from room to room, lockers, or the lunchroom. Additionally, students expressed specific preferences for particular instructional practices. This information allowed Ann Arbor's middle schools to develop specific student transition activities that addressed identified student concerns—issues of importance to students. Follow-up surveys showed that student anxiety was reduced as a result of this effort.

The professional staff also completed a questionnaire regarding middle school issues. This showed that the staff was supportive of such items as "each student having at least one teacher who knows her/him well," and "flexible schedules that allow for the use of block-time in the core subjects," both identified components in exemplary middle level programs. The same survey showed that the staff was very concerned that the district office had already made decisions about the specific components of the middle school program, and that the staff would have little impact on those decisions.

Parents were also surveyed, and the results indicated that they were concerned that the school provide a safe environment for their youngsters, and that the reorganization occur in a thoughtful way that would provide a more appropriate educational program for all students. The parent survey is included as Appendix D.

Each survey was useful in determining the specific needs of a particular constituent group. This assessment permitted the district to utilize its resources to provide each audience with the information they needed, while not using resources to provide information or address issues that were not identified concerns.

A series of meetings was held with the Student Advocate School Board, a group of

middle and high school students that advises the board of education. During these meetings students' were invited to describe their vision of a viable middle school program. The students' views contributed greatly to the program development. These sessions were also useful in determining the specific information needs of students so that appropriate strategies could be selected and implemented.

During the planning process the PTO Council sponsored a series of 10 public forums to discuss the middle school program. Each forum provided opportunities for parents and community members to receive information about the planning process and the middle school program, as well as to make comments and ask questions of the school administration regarding the transition. Each of these sessions helped identify important parent and community concerns.

Questions and comments at the first two or three forums focused on understanding the rationale for the middle school program and the need to reorganize. Later sessions dealt primarily with specific transition activities and course offerings. By tabulating the number of questions in specific content areas at each session, the district was able to ascertain when parents felt they had sufficient information regarding program objectives and rationale, and when there was a need for specific program information. This allowed the district to implement an information program that met the needs of the community.

Developing and Selecting Strategies

Once the information needs of each audience have been determined, it is essential to select, develop, and implement a variety of strategies that provide for these needs. In most cases, no one strategy will address all the issues.

During Ann Arbor's middle school planning process, several activities for providing information were used. A series of newsletters entitled *Middle School Update* were published. Early issues focused on topics that had been identified as important to the various audiences.

The *Middle School Update* was distributed to all staff members, mailed to parents of children in grades K-8, and made available in public libraries and senior citizen centers throughout the community. Samples of these newsletters are included as Appendix K.

In addition to these written communications, a telephone hotline was established. The phone number was included in all publications and provided a mechanism for individual citizens to receive answers to their questions. The hotline was rarely used, but it was an important symbol of openness.

Other communication strategies included speaking to community service organizations, meeting with individual staffs and PTO groups, and conducting a series of community forums. These forums were held twice in each middle school. They were hosted by the school district PTO council and included brief comments by school district officials, followed by an opportunity for citizens to ask questions about the planning process.

Marketing Program

Ann Arbor retained a professional public relations firm to assist the district in preparing a strategy for marketing the middle school program. Initially, the use of a public relations firm was viewed as a way to augment district staff in developing a structured

process for meeting all the information needs of the school district. It was planned that the work would focus on evaluating existing materials and activities, developing additional strategies, and assisting with their implementation. However, it developed into a way of independently assessing whether or not the staff and community supported the middle school program. This assessment by an outside firm was useful in verifying the district's own data gathering.

The process of developing a marketing plan began by consulting with a local public relations firm to learn about the marketing concept and to develop specifications for the project. As a public institution, the school district was obligated to bid the specifications and award the project based on the various bids. The bidding process required that firms submit samples of previous work, as well as ideas regarding the Ann Arbor Middle School project. A committee of parents and staff assisted in making the recommendation for hiring.

Once the firm was selected, they worked with the district to develop a specific timeline for the project, together with details of each activity. The timeline utilized by the Ann Arbor district is included in the chart.

Another initial task was to conduct an independent survey of parents, staff, and citizens to assess the needs for information about the middle school project. These assessments confirmed much of the district's earlier beliefs concerning the support of the community. Knowing the issues was a very reassuring part of the project.

The major concerns of the community identified by the marketing firm were that planning be collaborative, thoughtful, and deliberate, and that the program be developed for long-term implementation. From these concerns a central theme was developed that

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ANN ARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MIDDLE SCHOOL—FOUR YEAR HIGH SCHOOL
COMMUNICATIONS TIMELINE
1987 - 1989

PHASE 1: Develop Communication Strategy **Nov 87 - Jan 88**
Evaluate existing materials and actions. Develop implementation plan for direct mail, community and media focus groups, student events, program materials, and budget.

PHASE 2: Bidding Process **Jan 88**
Solicit competitive bids and make selection of communications consultant.

PHASE 3: Develop Communication Materials **Jan 88 - Mar 88**
(based on approved marketing plan)
Develop slogan/mission statement. Write, design, and produce information materials. Develop supplementary promotional materials such as giveaways and premiums.

PHASE 4: Publicity and Press Relations **Jan 88 - Sep 89**
Develop publicity resource list. Develop press kits and background information. Distribute material to press, and monitor media received.

PHASE 5: Community Relations and Events **Jan 88 - Sep 89**
Develop special events (focus groups and speeches), and community activities. Implement these special events and activities.

would support the total communications effort.

"Planning Our Future" was selected as the theme based upon the issues raised during the community survey. Each of the three words was selected to convey a particular message. The word "planning" represents a thoughtful and deliberate process; "our" reinforces the participative nature of the planning; and "future" demonstrates the long-term nature of the middle school effort. This theme was then incorporated into district newsletters, brochures, and peripheral items and became a visual symbol reinforcing the central concepts of the entire change process.

The major recommendation from the marketing firm was that the district modify its middle school newsletters. It was suggested that the text be written in "plain English." Additionally, the format was modifed to one page and incorporated the "Planning Our Future" theme. A sample of the revised format is included as Appendix L.

The district also developed a number of peripheral items: Note pads, bookmarks, and buttons were distributed, each incorporating the middle school logo. T-shirts displaying the theme and logo were donated by several firms and given to members of the planning committees. As the project moved into its final stage, a motivational poster was designed and distributed to all schools.

The entire project cost less than the salary of a full-time employee. The district paid only for actual services rendered and was able to add to or delete projects as their costs were determined.

Conclusion

Whatever the strategy selected, the key to building positive community relations is to identify the needs of the various constituent groups and organizing a planned effort to address those needs. Regular assessment of the information requirements, flexibility in delivering the information, and a willingness to be creative in dealing with the issues are all stategies that contribute to a successful community relations program.

4.

Coping with Dissent

Every attempt by school districts to reorganize prompts dissent. Dissent can serve a valuable function by providing a way for constituents to raise questions, request information, insist on participation in planning, and slow or alter the outcomes of the planning. The right of constituents to speak and be heard on issues is firmly rooted in the American political tradition. Learning to deal with dissent and turn it to support is critical to the success of any school district change.

The Role of Dissent

Mention of the word "change" provokes a variety of reactions among people, ranging from great enthusiasm to outright antagonism. People move toward acceptance at different rates. Most members of organizations will ultimately support change, but they have varied needs for information, and for time to process that information and reach conclusions. Only a small percentage of members will never support the change process.

Dissent is usually based on feelings and beliefs, not on information or data, which makes it very difficult to address. Those in leadership positions can help deal with dissent by facilitating the process of clarifying feelings and allowing the dissenters to work through their concerns. This reinforces the fact that schools are human organizations designed to educate our youth. This human factor—students, staff, and parents—must repeatedly be taken into account during a transition, especially when dealing with dissent.

Dissent is a necessary and valuable part of the change process. Being criticized, questioned, and analyzed by individuals or groups forces the proponents of change to be more careful in their planning. Our critics are among our greatest allies and should be accorded the same respect as our strongest supporters. By approaching dissent with such a positive outlook, one can use it to enhance the product of the change process.

Careful discussion of each issue, generating alternatives, and studying the advantages and disadvantages of each option strengthen the planning effort. Such a critique will result in a more thoughtful plan as a result of the review.

Questions and concerns raised by dissenters can serve as a barometer of community feeling and as an alternative source of issues to be addressed through the public relations program. The concerns are generally legitimate issues related to program

implementation, and such issues should be addressed.

Identifying the Issues

District planners must work diligently to identify the issues of greatest concern to various groups. Phone hotlines, staff and community surveys, and community forums are techniques that allow dissent to be heard and responded to in a structured way. Questions and concerns must be welcomed, and those asking the questions must be treated with respect and provided the requested information as quickly as possible. Providing the necessary information is perhaps the most important strategy for managing dissent.

Dissenters will use verbal as well as nonverbal actions to signal resistance. When speaking with individuals or groups, leaders must look for the nonverbal clues that often indicate lack of agreement with what is being said. Two strategies might be used to verbalize the nonverbal dissent. One step is to ask participants to write their questions or comments about the planning. This allows people who are not willing to speak out in a meeting to express their opinions and get the information they want. A second strategy is to meet in small groups and ask each group to identify the topics they would like to discuss. Both these techniques may identify important planning concerns and elicit input from nonverbal dissenters.

Legitimizing Dissent

School administrators should recognize that ignoring dissent is usually counterproductive. Pretending that there is no dissent simply provides the dissenters with an additional issue: not being listened to. This often diverts the planning process from addressing content issues to dealing with issues of process. This should be avoided whenever possible.

An alternative approach is to treat dissent as rational. Legitimize dissent and turn it to an advantage. Discussing the issues with individuals or groups is important. During these meetings listen for the key issue. Ask clarifying questions. Use neutral, non-inflammatory language. Expect your critics to be thoughtful in their criticism. Remember that dissent is often based on feelings and beliefs, and an individual perception of what is currently taking place or what is proposed. While these perceptions may not be accurate, they must still be addressed. It is important not to take the criticism personally. Make a good faith effort to respond to the questions and deal with the issue.

One particularly good strategy is to ask people to write their comments or questions. The process of committing their thoughts to paper will provide an opportunity to lessen some of the emotion. It also provides a vehicle for soliciting constituent input, and it allows the specific information needs of the participant group to be addressed.

In the early stages of Ann Arbor's planning for middle schools, a group of elementary school parents was very vocal about their belief that sixth graders did not belong in the same school with seventh and eighth graders. A two-pronged approach was used to address the issue. First, information on adolescent development was provided to those who truly believed that, developmentally, it was an inappropriate grade grouping. The second and more significant response was to clarify why the parents believed as they did. This clarification showed that they were concerned about

their children's safety, and they were uncertain about the advantages of a middle school for their youngsters. Both these issues could be addressed during the planning. The real issue, student safety, was quite different from the stated issue, inappropriate grade configuration.

These same parents arranged numerous meetings, scheduled times to speak to the board of education, and wrote letters to the local newspaper. Each criticism directed at the middle level program appeared unjustified to those directing the planning effort and made them most uncomfortable. However, the dissenters very clearly identified two major issues that were incorporated into the planning: articulation of the advantages for students in a middle school setting, and assurances about student safety. The vocal dissent at an early stage in the planning allowed the district to ensure that these issues were addressed.

Another useful strategy is to include known dissenters on planning committees. It is much more difficult to criticize a reorganization process when you have been included in its planning. People support what they help to create. Having dissenters on committees will not stifle dissent, but it certainly provides a legitimate forum for its discussion. Second, including dissenters in the planning process reinforces the idea that the committees are not structured to rubber-stamp a predetermined solution.

The inclusion of dissenters also allows them to share information about the planning effort with their network of supporters. Imagine the power of a set of recommendations developed collaboratively with dissenters and presented with their support!

These are the critical steps in turning dissent into support: Identify the issues, provide needed information, treat dissent as rational and useful, and incorporate known dissenters into the planning process.

Turning Dissent into Support

Other steps can be taken to assist in dealing with dissent. One of these is to allow sufficient time for planning.

Acknowledging that people move through the change process and toward acceptance at different rates means that enough time must be allocated to generate a well-conceived plan, provide necessary staff development, and prepare for implementation. Allowing insufficient time for these steps does not provide for the varied needs of an organization's members, and it fosters criticism that the administration has a predetermined course of action.

An additional strategy for dealing with dissent is to ensure that the planning committees consider a variety of alternatives for implementing the program, and identify the advantages and disadvantages of each. Every program option will have disadvantages. They should be acknowledged and discussed in the context of student needs and known advantages.

What may appear to be a trivial matter to the planners may be a major issue to an individual or group. These issues must be dealt with in the planning process. Once the issues have been identified, it is important to provide information regarding them. If there is no information, that should be stated. Rather than fake a response, be candid and state when the answer will be known.

One final note about dissent: Many dissenters have a need to be heard and acknowledged. Taking the time to meet with individuals or groups, to talk with them and listen to their concerns, is extremely helpful. Often these meetings will resolve the

issue. Such meetings offer an opportunity to build positive community relations. Those dissenting must be made to feel that they are appreciated and respected, and that their views are welcome.

Dissent is part of the change effort. Welcome it and use it to strengthen and enhance the planning process.

Real vs. Fake Issues

Any effort at school district reorganization will cause numerous issues to surface that call for resolution. Some issues will be clearly related to the reorganization and must be addressed during the planning process. Other issues will not appear to have as direct a link to planning. These may serve as smokescreens, legitimate issues that are raised to conceal less noble motives. Still other issues will be raised that are clearly unrelated to the reorganization process.

Identifying the Issues

A school district engaged in a reorganization effort must respond to lengthy lists of questions and concerns raised by the school community. These concerns generally fall into one of three categories: those clearly related to the reorganization; those less apparent in their relationship to the reorganization; and those unrelated to the change. Each category of concern must be addressed in a different manner.

The most common category consists of issues directly related to the planning activity. These are "real" issues, which will be resolved in the normal course of planning. They are usually fundamental to the topic being addressed, or are critical logistical components necessary to implement the planned change.

During Ann Arbor's planning for middle school implementation, many "real" issues surfaced, such as the date and process for selecting staff, content of course offerings, and structure of the intramural program. This type of issue is most often dealt with by ensuring that it will be included in the planning timeline. Once this is done, it is essential that the school community be kept informed on progress.

The second type of concern that arises is one that masks other issues. These are often raised in order to screen a less noble motive, or because the person lacks information with which to clarify the "real" issues.

Three examples will help to explain how this works. Staff members in several schools were very concerned that the implementation of middle schools would result in less emphasis on, and loss of time for, academic subjects. This group believed that there was no way to address affective issues and still have a strong academic program. The facts were that class periods would be only two minutes shorter than in the previous system, and teachers would be organized into interdisciplinary teams. After numerous discussions with representatives of the teachers and the leaders of their bargaining unit, it became clear that the real issue was a fear of being a teacher adviser. Bringing the real issue to the surface allowed the district to address it directly by working with staff members to clearly define the role of the teacher adviser, and offering staff development to support those who would be assuming this new role.

Another example of a "fake" issue is the position adopted by several staff members that "We can't participate in planning until the program has been negotiated." The bargaining unit leadership did not advocate this position, but individual members used it

as a way to avoid involvement in planning activities. Discussion with these staff members revealed that the real issue was their lack of support for the middle school concept—far different from their stated issue, "It hasn't been negotiated."

A third example of this type of issue originated with the staff of one curricular area. When student course selection sheets were prepared and distributed, the teachers questioned the location of quarter-year elective courses at the bottom of the sheet. They proclaimed loudly that this clearly gave preference to other curricular departments such as math, science, and music—which were located at the top of the sheet. They claimed such action showed that they were being treated as "second class." After much discussion, it became clear that the real issue was whether or not enough students would select their courses so that their teaching positions would be maintained. This was a very different issue from the location of courses on the course selection sheet.

In one of Ann Arbor's middle schools, staff members petitioned the central office regarding the advisory program. The staff had calculated the number of sheets of paper that would be required for the program, and the petition stated that the school did not have the resources with which to implement the program. Rather than state concerns about the advisory concept or the specifics of the curriculum, the staff chose to raise the issue of paper and budget, a legitimate issue but one that masked the real issue.

Occasionally an individual or interest group will present an issue that they have not successfully addressed in other forums and will attempt to link it to the new program. Examples of these issues include suggesting that attendance boundaries must be modified to balance enrollments among all schools; or that facilities need renovation before the new program can be implemented.

Clarifying the Issues

In any reorganization effort, a lengthy list of concerns will be generated. There are many ways to establish such a list. Among them are listening for questions asked repeatedly at public meetings, tabulating calls to a phone hotline, asking the leaders of the various employee groups, and listening to questions raised by board of education members. Still other strategies include allowing people to submit written questions at meetings, and adding an item, "concerns of the members," to the agendas of all planning committees.

Once issues are identified, they should be clarified. The issue raised may only slightly resemble the real concern. Asking for more data, or for the chance to talk privately with the person raising the question, will provide the opportunity to probe for additional information so that the depth of concern can be assessed. Follow-up discussions also convey a sincere interest in clarifying the issue and providing resolution. Asking members of a steering committee or other planning groups to assist in clarifying questions and assessing the magnitude of the concern will provide another perspective.

There is no easy system for sorting out issues and placing them into categories. When issues or concerns are initially raised it is easy to discount many as having little substance, or having already been answered. It is important to remember that every issue is important to someone and calls for a response. Often even the most ardent supporters of a reorganization effort are concerned that critics and dissenters be treated in a respectful way. Doing otherwise may jeopardize the support of others.

Dealing with issues that surface requires tact and diplomacy. Planners should always

welcome questions and encourage thoughtful dialog. In many cases the concern will have been resolved or is in the process of resolution. If this is the case, that information should be shared. Often people raising concerns merely want assurance that the issue won't be overlooked. For example, during the Ann Arbor planning process, several staff members were concerned that the content of specific courses would be modified without their participation. By assuring the staff members of the involvement of teachers and providing a timeline and process for that involvement, their concern was alleviated.

Often adding an item to the planning timeline and scheduling it for resolution will address the concern. An example of this occurred during the development of the middle school sports program in Ann Arbor. Coaches and athletic directors were concerned that the program would be managed from the central office. They were also concerned that resolution of the matter would be delayed. By developing and publicizing a specific timeline for program development, as well as detailing the composition of the planning committee, this concern was resolved.

Many issues that arise will already have been addressed. If they continue to be raised, either the information has not been shared adequately with those needing the information, or the resolution did not sufficiently address the concern. In either case a response is appropriate. If information requires dissemination, it can be incorporated into future newsletters targeted toward the affected audiences. On the other hand, a controversial resolution may necessitate further study. Incorporating members of the dissenting group into this additional study will more likely ensure a mutually satisfactory resolution.

The Human Factor

One of the most critical issues to surface during school reorganization is the need to address many basic needs of the teaching staff. Concerns over teaching assignments, room assignments, and availability of materials become paramount for many staff persons. Often those in charge of the planning are more concerned with the substantive program changes, forgetting that many staff members are not able to focus on the larger issues until they are assured that their basic needs have been met.

Abraham Maslow saw human needs as falling into a hierarchy. The higher needs, such as esteem and the desire for knowledge, arise only after the lower needs, such as food and safety, have been met. If a lower need conflicts with a higher one of equal strength, the lower one will prevail. Maslow also believed that the highest level of functioning occurs when a person is self-actualized, having had all other needs in the hierarchy satisfied. In general, Maslow stated, the satisfaction of more basic needs allows a person to become self-actualized.

Maslow's hierarchy can be applied to the process of school district change. The attached chart reflects many of the issues that should be addressed at all levels of the hierarchy for staff, parents, students, and administrators. All participants in the change process are unable to focus their energy on the higher needs, such as curriculum development, until the lower needs, such as their assignments and the safety of their children, are met.

For teachers, critical threshold questions deal with their teaching assignments. Concerns about the schools to which they will be assigned, the courses they will teach, their rooms, and whether materials and supplies will be available must be addressed

before most are able to progress to other planning needs.

Parents exhibit the same hierarchical need. The primary issue for parents focuses on student safety and security. Once that issue is adequately dealt with, parents are able to move on to further discussion of the advantages of middle level schools and the structure of the program.

Students entering a new school face similar concerns. They are often worried about who their teachers will be, the courses they will take, safety issues, and being successful. Each of these student concerns must be addressed so that they can progress to other areas of need.

HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

	Staff	Parents	Students	Administrators
Aesthetic Needs: (self-actualization)	Attention to the needs of students first	Attention to the needs of students first	Attention to my needs first	Attention to the needs of students first Appropriate attention to the needs of staff and parents
Need for Understanding:	Focus on the developmental needs of students	Curriculum content	Exploration	Knowledge of middle level students, curriculum, instruction, and assessment
Need for Knowledge:	Staff development • student needs • program models • planning skills • curriculum • instruction • assessment • multi-cultural	Knowledge of middle level adolescent	New areas of study Enrichment Teaching specialists	Knowledge of middle level programs Process skills for collaborative planning
Esteem Needs:	Will I be successful?	Will my child be successful?	Will I be successful?	Will I be successful?
Belonging Needs:	Will I be valued? Will I fit in? New social/work norms	Will my child fit in? New social norms	Will the other kids like me? Will I be safe? New social norms	New organization norms Will I be able to recognize achievement of self and others?
Security Needs:	What school will I be assigned to?	Is the staff qualified? Will my child be safe?	Who will my teacher be?	How will I organize this school?
Survival Needs:	What will I be assigned to teach? Will I know the content of the curriculum? Where will my room be? Will I have sufficient and appropriate materials? Are the courses developed?		What courses will I take? Will I get lost? Will I be safe?	How do we plan for the new model? What school will I be assigned to? Who will be on my staff? Will the staff/parents/students support this program? Will I receive support from the central office?

Adapted from Maslow

Administrators are yet another group that shares similar concerns. Their concerns are reflected in issues such as where they will be assigned; how to plan or organize the school; who will be on their staff; and whether or not they will receive support from staff, parents, and students, as well as the central office.

In each case, the focus must be on assisting individuals and groups as they move through this hierarchy of needs. Anticipating their concerns, developing a timeline for addressing the concerns, and openly communicating the results of the planning are essential to assisting constituent groups through the change process.

Addressing the Issues

Ann Arbor teachers raised several basic issues that were clearly related to the reorganization effort. Perhaps the most critical from a teacher's perspective was that of staffing.

Michigan is a collective bargaining state. The school district is required to negotiate the "terms and conditions" of employment, which includes staff assignment and transfer. Early in the reorganization effort it became apparent that it was mutally beneficial for the teachers' association and the school district to resolve the process for selecting and assigning staff to our middle schools.

For the school district, resolving this issue at an early date allowed staff members to plan for their new assignments, plan with their new colleagues, and determine any staffing needs for program implementation.

The teachers' association also saw an advantage in resolving this issue. Their membership was concerned about the staffing process and wanted their assignments to be determined. Achieving closure to this issue provided an answer to staff questions, reassured the community that we were proceeding thoughtfully, and facilitated the ongoing planning at the school level.

This critical decision in the reorganization process should always include discussion and involvement of staff. Because of the nature of this basic staff need, resolving this issue can affect all other aspects of the planning.

Nearly 17 months before the opening of Ann Arbor's middle schools, a process was in place to identify and select the staff. Fifteen months before implementation, teachers and administrators knew their assignments. Resolving this issue allowed planning to proceed to more substantive issues. (The document describing the teacher transfer process is included as Appendix G.)

Early staffing of the schools allowed the "new" staffs to meet during the year prior to program implementation. Staff members knew where they would be teaching and could therefore be involved in the planning decisions related to their own middle schools.This created extensive staff ownership of the individual school programs.

Rumors

Rumors are another unavoidable part of any reorganization effort. While it is easy to discount or ignore rumors, they often develop lives of their own, and the more they are repeated the more substance they seem to have. One way to combat rumors is to establish a rumor control office. Such an office may be simply a phone line where people can call for information. This office or phone line can also be used to monitor issues that surface. This knowledge can then be used to refine the information activities.

During Ann Arbor's middle school planning, a rumor circulated that teachers at one school were locked in a room until they had decided on their team assignments. While there was no substance to the rumor, staff members in other schools had been searching for evidence that the administration was using a heavy-handed approach to middle school staffing. In order to combat the rumor, staff members were encouraged to talk with their colleagues in the school where the activity allegedly took place. Teachers were assured once again that the decision regarding team assignments was a local school decision and not one imposed from the district office.

It is easy to laugh at some of these issues. However, they were important to someone and, therefore, deserved a response. Not all issues are of the same significance. Nevertheless, the manner in which the issue is responded to will either facilitate or hinder the planning process.

Conclusion

The change process is anxiety-producing. This anxiety surfaces in numerous ways: questions are raised, resistance is generated, unrelated issues surface, and rumors abound. Recognizing that each of these will occur is the first step in addressing them. The development and implementation of strategies for dealing with these problems is essential to their successful resolution.

5.

TRANSITION—PLANNING FOR THE CHANGE

An important factor in assisting the transition to a new organization is to include those affected by the decision in the planning process. The advantages of a collaborative planning effort were affirmed in Chapter 2. If a collaborative process has been utilized, the transition will proceed more smoothly.

One key to a successful transition is to provide specific, discrete activities that address the needs of those being affected by the changes. Those needs will vary and, therefore, are best designed and implemented at the local school level. For example, each school might convene a committee composed of staff members, parents, and students to plan the transition activities. This group should be given a specific task to accomplish and a time when the task is to be completed. Such a transition committee should be asked to plan activities that will assist and support individuals making the move to a reorganized system.

Not only will individuals respond to the reorganization in different ways, but groups will have different needs during the transition. Activities that support students and parents may not be helpful to the staff; efforts to support the staff may not meet the needs of students or parents. Planning for each group will be necessary.

STAFF NEEDS

Because they have a highly visible role in implementing any new program, it is crucial that the staff members feel supported throughout the transition. Any reorganization process places additional burdens on school personnel. Not only will they be involved in planning, participating in staff development, and dealing with the adjustment to a new organization, they will also continue to conduct business as usual.

Some of these issues can be addressed by providing time and resources so that the staff members can be involved in planning and staff development activities. Other issues will require sensitivity to the extra burden placed on the staff. Often, however, the paramount issue with teachers is being clear on their assignments.

The staff requires support in two other significant ways. During the planning for a new program, staff members are expected not only to plan for the new program, but also to maintain the status quo. For some it will be critical to ensure that the old practices, procedures, and structures are not abandoned during the planning process. The need for stability and structure during a time of change is crucial for some school

personnel.

The planning process must emphasize the benefits of the "new order" without rejecting the "old" practices. Sensitivity to those who have strong ties to past practices will be very helpful in facilitating the transition. Accentuating the benefits without commenting on past practice is the best approach.

The other significant need of the staff during change is the opportunity to grieve for the loss of old structures and practices. A reorganization may result in the transfer of personnel or a restructuring of the instructional process. Such actions may significantly alter relationships among staff members. In many cases, schools will be asked to abandon or modify past practices such as grouping or interscholastic sports, which may have brought awards or recognition to the school. This recognition may make acceptance of the change more difficult. It requires that advantages for students be stressed without discounting past successes.

Being sensitive to this sense of loss and providing the opportunity for staff members to mourn the passing of past practices is most appropriate. Some schools have ceremonies and celebrations to acknowledge past successes, recognize departing staff members, and celebrate the new beginning at the time of a reorganization.

Staff Development

Providing a broad-based staff development program is an essential component of any school district change. Staff development must be approached with the understanding that, in any staff, the needs for development will differ. Therefore, an effective staff development program must provide opportunities for personnel to obtain the needed skills in a variety of programs and structures.

Staff development is a process, not a program. Staff members will approach staff development based upon their previous experiences, their perceived information needs, and their own learning style. Keeping this in mind, staff development must be delivered in a variety of ways. While the ideal might be to offer staff development as an entirely individualized program, most districts do not have the resources to do so. Nevertheless, all districts are able to provide staff development in two different ways: individually and as a group.

Individual staff development may include many different activities, including sabbaticals, attendance at conferences, site visits specifically related to the topic, or the creation of an individual development plan.

Group staff development is the more traditional model. This delivery system includes group workshops and classes, internal district conferences, common readings, and the use of consultants.

Regardless of the method selected for offering staff development, the key is to ensure that the activities focus on district or school goals, are implemented following a needs assessment, and promote the professional development of the staff.

Throughout Ann Arbor's middle school planning, staff development opportunities were provided. During the initial year, staff development focused on providing activities at the district level that acquainted staff members with the middle school concept, discussed the characteristics of middle school students, and shared successful program models.

During the week prior to the opening of school, the district held a one-day middle school mini-conference. This consisted of a keynote speaker and several break-out

sessions on the middle school concept. This was followed by additional sessions scheduled throughout the remainder of the school year on specific middle school topics, such as teaming, advisory programs, and the developmental characteristics of the middle school student.

In subsequent years the staff development program consisted of a combination of district sessions and school-based activities. Each middle school was provided with a budget for staff development. This resource could be used to support school-based planning and was designed to address the particular staff development needs of each school. In order to receive the funds, the schools were required to collaboratively develop a school plan that identified the objectives to be achieved.

This approach to staff development supported school-based planning and reinforced the district's commitment to the participation of staff members in decisions affecting them.

Administrative Support

The school administrator is the key to any reorganization process. Administrators are responsible for facilitating the change and assisting their staffs in planning for and implementing the revised program. Their knowledge of the change activity, support for its success, and ability to work with staff members to implement the change are critical to its success.

It is essential, therefore, that the administrators be provided with the same sort of support and assistance provided to other staff members. The unique role of the administrator means that this support must be tailored to fit the need.

The administrator's role is multi-faceted. They must possess broad knowledge of the school program, develop and communicate a vision for the school, supervise the daily instructional program, and display positive climate and interpersonal skills. In addition, administrators must possess effective management, communication, and decision-making skills. They must demonstrate and promote professional growth for themselves and their staff.

School district reorganization necessitates the use of each of these skills and, in addition, requires that administrators display effective skills in planning and implementing a school program. To be effective in this role it is imperative that school districts provide opportunities for their administrators to receive the information they will need regarding the change, and to refine and enhance the process skills necessary for working with their staffs during the transition.

During the two years prior to the implementation of middle schools, the Ann Arbor district provided a series of 20 study sessions for the middle level administrative staff. A topic was selected for each session, and resource persons from within and outside the district assisted in providing the workshops. Initially the sessions focused on developing a common base of knowledge about the middle school concept and effective practices at the middle level. Topics such as interdisciplinary teaming, adviser/advisee programs, and grouping practices were included in these initial sessions.

During the second year of planning, the administrators worked with the staffs in their schools to develop local implementation plans. This planning step required a change in the focus of the administrative study sessions. The sessions focused more on process issues such as collaborative planning, working with reluctant staff members, and developing new programs. The administrators shared the plans being developed in their

individual schools and sought and received the advice of their colleagues.

The benefits of the study sessions went beyond the increased knowledge and process skills obtained by the administrators. The sessions helped develop a "team" spirit among the administrators and fostered more collaborative and mutual problem solving among the membership. Developing these skills contributed to the successful school-based planning, where the administrators were expected to demonstrate this proficiency in dealing with their staffs.

Several strategies assisted in making the study sessions a success. Each meeting was preceded by an agenda that included readings concerning the topic to be discussed at the meeting. The sessions were scheduled at the end of the school day during an extended regular meeting time, and dinner was provided for each session.

These study sessions provided an opportunity for the administrative staff to gain additional knowledge and develop needed process skills in order to work more effectively with their staff members on the reorganization project. They were a demonstrable indication of the district's commitment to equip our administrators with the knowledge and skills that would ensure their success during the school-based planning process.

Student Needs

Most students readily adjust to new structures and programs; however, it is important that this adjustment not be taken for granted. Schools should plan specific activities that address student concerns, just as they plan for the orientation of staff members to a new program.

The best way to determine student concerns is to ask the students. Including students in selecting and planning the transition activities is another useful strategy. In Ann Arbor, a survey of students asked them to indicate how worried they were about 30 items (Appendix E). The data were prepared so that the district could address issues at that level, but were also disaggregated so that each middle level school could examine the needs of its own students. The students said that taking tests, taking showers in physical education, drugs, and failure were their four major concerns. The planning committees at both the district and school levels were then able to develop student transition activities that would address the specific concerns of the students attending that school.

Each year students make the transition into and out of every school. This yearly ritual requires that every school have a menu of activities that work well in assisting their students with the transition. Several examples will help to illustrate the value of having a well-planned and efficiently implemented program.

Youngsters often want to visit their new school. One middle school in Ann Arbor has found a very successful way for handling this activity. Groups of four or five students come to visit each day for several weeks. The groups are assigned "buddies" from the current student body. The visitors attend a few regular classes and have lunch before returning to their school. This program facilitates student-to-student communication and ensures that the visitors will have an opportunity to see the school in operation and interact with students. Students and parents praise its usefulness in reducing student anxiety about moving to a new school.

Another example of a transition activity is the "Fall Preview," in which students and their parents are able to visit the school during one evening in May. Current students

and staff members discuss the curricular offerings; demonstrate student skills in music, art, and industrial arts; display student work and projects; and meet informally with visitors to acquaint them with the middle school program. Tours of the building are available, and questions and concerns are addressed. This informal evening provides a warm, caring environment that permits students and parents to become acquainted with their new school.

During the Ann Arbor transition the local newspaper wanted to write a story about student worries regarding the move to the middle school. To research the story, they interviewed every fifth and sixth grade student at two district elementary schools. To a person, the students expressed no concern about the reorganization. They were excited about the opportunities for new classes and activities. In fact, the sixth graders complained that they would only get to spend two years in the middle school program. They wanted the program implemented as quickly as possible. Hearing such positive reactions from students reinforces the benefits of providing a student transition program that addresses their concerns and involves them in the planning.

Parent Needs

The needs of parents during the transition will, in many respects, mirror the responses of their children. If the youngsters are anxious, the parents will also be anxious. If the students are excited, the parents will be excited.

Throughout the reorganization process, parents need assurance that the new program will better serve their children. Providing the rationale for the program and the details of its functioning will assist in alleviating this concern. Including parent representatives on planning committees and holding regular public meetings to discuss the change also help address this issue.

In Ann Arbor, parents were surveyed regarding items that worried them about the district's implementation of middle schools. The results showed that a major concern for parents was the safety of their children. Another important concern was that their children's progress would be monitored by some adult in the new setting.

These results are almost identical to a study conducted by James Garvin of the New England League of Middle Schools (*Middle School Journal*, November 1987). This study found that middle level parents expect the following from their children's schools:

1. When my child goes to school, more than anything else I want to know that he/she is safe.
2. I want to know that—when my child is in school—he/she knows at least one adult well enough to go to if support is needed.
3. I want to know that the school is concerned about helping my youngster develop constructive friends.
4. I expect that school will provide my youngster with opportunities to get involved in activities.
5. When my youngster comes home from school, I want to know that he/she has had enough good experiences to want to return the next day.
6. While my children are in school during these years, I want to know that the school is teaching them what they will need to be prepared for high school.
7. While my youngster is in school, I want teachers to keep me informed on his/her progress.
8. When I visit the school, I want to feel welcomed by teachers and administrators.

9. I'd like to know that the school is making every effort to provide opportunities for parents to be informed about what to expect from youngsters during these years.

The Ann Arbor experience also demonstrated great interest on the part of parents for parent workshops. Opportunities to learn about and discuss the developmental characteristics of adolescents were well attended. Nearly every PTO group requested such a workshop. Throughout the planning process the workshops were regularly scheduled in order to address this parent need. Individual schools will continue to provide parent workshops as part of the district's middle level program.

Providing parents with information about what constitutes normal, healthy adolescent development provided the opportunity to also discuss programmatic and instructional issues. It provided a forum at which the advantages of the middle school program could be discussed and served as a mechanism to allay parent concerns and build parent support for the program.

Conclusion

The importance of addressing the specific transitional needs of staff, students, and parents should not be overlooked. One measure of the support for any reorganization effort is the degree of comfort and satisfaction felt by those being affected by the change. No single transition activity will address the needs of all staff members, students, and parents. The critical step is recognizing the need to provide support during change, and then working with the groups to identify their particular needs and useful strategies for addressing those needs.

6.

Planning Pitfalls

The process of restructuring a school or district is extremely complex, and any number of things can go wrong. Understanding that the change process will undoubtedly generate issues that require resolution, and that resistance is a common element of change will assist the educational leader in responding to problems.

Perhaps the most common problem is that of teacher resistance, which usually arises from a lack of information about the proposed change, and fear that implementation will require giving up familiar practices and routines. Strategies for dealing with staff resistance include identifying the issues; providing information about the proposed restructuring; allowing for participation in determining the specific implementation steps; and planned ignoring, that is, recognizing that rarely will all staff members support any new endeavor.

Another pitfall for successful planning is the failure to identify early in the planning process the task to be accomplished, the timeline, and the party responsible for decisions. It is imperative that the task be clear, that those involved understand the parameters for planning and the timeline to be followed, and that decision-making responsibility be identified. Imagine a staff's frustration if they have devoted time and energy to the study of an issue, developed strategies for addressing it, and decided upon a course of action—only to learn that some other body will have the final word. Such a result will surely hinder further collaborative planning.

A third pitfall to guard against is the loss of commitment to the program being restructured. This can happen in different ways. The governing body (the board of education, for example) may change, district leadership may be altered, or the circumstances compelling action may be alleviated by other means. Any of these may result in a loss of commitment.

To guard against such a loss, involve people who have a significant stake in the outcome of the planning. Attention to identifying all key constituent groups, providing significant involvement in planning, and ensuring broad-based ownership of the plans will all help maintain commitment. A second strategy is to develop and implement an evaluation plan that gathers data about student work in both the cognitive and affective areas. Developing a list of indicators of student performance (e.g., grades, student and staff attendance, participation in activities, parent conferences) and gathering data over several years will provide a way to discuss program needs based on information.

One final caution: Effective planning often means that the constituent groups become

advocates for the restructuring; they believe that the result will address issues that they perceive deserve attention. These groups often expect, therefore, that the restructured system will quickly achieve their goals. When all goals are not met in the initial months following restructuring, some of these groups begin to second-guess the effort.

While such questioning is normal and useful for a school district, it is imperative that groups understand that the change process does not occur in an instant. Because the process relies on many persons—some believers and some nonbelievers in the new direction, the implementation will often be uneven and encounter problems. Assisting constituent groups in "staying the course" will be necessary.

One strategy for addressing this problem is to establish a clear timeline and method for program evaluation. Using the performance indicators mentioned earlier as a database against which to measure the success of program implementation, and identifying a process for review of the program in a timely manner will often alleviate the fear that there will be no monitoring or adjustment of a new program.

As with most things, avoiding the pitfalls in the first place is the most effective strategy for dealing with them. Involving all constituent groups in planning and listening to their concerns; planning for building and maintaining strong and effective community relations; dealing with dissent; and supporting students, parents, staff, and the community throughout the planning process will surely further your efforts.

CONCLUSION

School reorganization may seem to be an overwhelming task. However, there are several predictable activities that must be completed to ensure a successful change process. These include clarifying the mission, collaborative planning, sharing information, dealing with dissent, and planning for the transition.

As school districts embark on the reorganization process, two other essentials must be kept in mind. Each school district has unique strengths, characteristics, and constituencies. This will necessitate the development of a planning model that is appropriate to that district. First and foremost, the change process must be responsive to the nature of the school district and the students it serves.

The other essential factor is that schools are human enterprises. As such, they must reflect and be responsive to the interaction among the various constituencies: students, staff, parents, and community. This will require that the reorganization process be attentive to the individual needs of these groups and the individuals within each group. Failure to support individuals as they respond to the reorganization process can jeopardize its success.

One final comment about planning must be shared. The chance to be involved in addressing issues related to better serving students and refining and enhancing our educational practices is an exciting prospect, one in which the participants can have a long-term enduring impact. The rewards are bountiful: the opportunity to better serve the youth of your community and affect the future of our nation. Enjoy!

APPENDIX A. PLANNING CHECKLIST

1.0 Defining the Context
- ____ 1.1 Document demographic changes
- ____ 1.2 Conduct external scan for effective practices
- ____ 1.3 Assess internal practices
- ____ 1.4 Identify constituent groups

2.0 Planning To Plan
- ____ 2.1 Determine constituent participation
  - groups to be included in planning
  - tasks for participation
- ____ 2.2 Define the task/timeline
  - prepare charge for committees
  - create timeline for planning
- ____ 2.3 Survey staff/parents regarding planning issues

3.0 Program Planning Activities
- ____ 3.1 Establish planning committees
- ____ 3.2 Develop a mission/philosophy statement
- ____ 3.3 Define the district program standards
  - provide a common base of information
- ____ 3.4 Plan specifics for program implementation
  - provide models and staff development
  - plan program components
  - prepare and implement pilots
  - determine decisions for school-based decision making
  - assess and provide resources to support school-based planning
  - identify and address staff concerns
  - provide staff development
- ____ 3.5 Prepare for program implementation
  - staff transfer
  - facility modification
  - moving equipment/materials
- ____ 3.6 Prepare for program evaluation
  - determine indicators of performance
  - gather current data for later comparison

4.0 Planned Community Relations
- ____ 4.1 Determine audiences
  - students
  - parents
  - staff
  - community
  - bargaining groups
- ____ 4.2 survey and assess needs
- ____ 4.3 develop and select communication strategies

5.0 Dealing with Dissent

____ 5.1 Identify the issues
- assess real vs. fake issues

____ 5.2 Legitimize dissent

____ 5.3 Develop and implement strategies

6.0 Planning for the Transition

____ 6.1 Staff needs
- placement
- assignments
- materials
- moving

____ 6.2 Administrative support
- knowledge of the program
- skill development

____ 6.3 Student needs

____ 6.4 Parent needs

7.0 Implementation

____ 7.1 Staff transfer

____ 7.2 Materials and equipment moves

____ 7.3 Facility modifications

____ 7.4 Orientation programs

____ 7.5 Program evaluation

Appendix B. Developmental Needs of Middle Level Students

The middle school is a transitional school concerned with the most appropriate program to cope with the personal and educational developmental needs of emerging adolescents, youths who are generally between the ages of 10 and 14.

As is true of many psychological terms to designate developmental stages and mental conditions, the term "emerging adolescent" is not easily defined. The emerging adolescent is a special individual identified by certain physical, intellectual, psychological, and social characteristics. The following qualities provide a general description of the characteristics of the age group.

1. During these years, youths are beginning to be aware of imminent body changes, and they seem to be characterized by restlessness and the need to be physically active. These students may exhibit:
   a. Increased interest in the physical aspects of the body, including its functions and changes.
   b. Generally rapid, though irregular, physical development with resultant differences among peers, due to uneven growth and development.
   c. Awkward and uncoordinated movements, due to bone growth not coinciding with muscle growth.
   d. Considerable attention to personal appearance and concern with irregularities, such as skin blemishes, scars, and obesity.
2. There seems to be a desire on the part of youths of this age to begin to assert their need for independence—especially their independence from adults. In a sense, by breaking away from adults, they are asserting their own individuality. These students often:
   a. Have ambivalent desires: want freedom, but fear the loss of certain securities.
   b. Become more independent, yet still feel the need for direction and regulation.
   c. Attempt to identify with adults other than parents.
3. While emerging adolescents are in the process of beginning to establish some degree of independence and individuality, they tend to begin to establish a stronger sense of a group identity with their age. Hence, they begin to display the well-known adolescent phenomenon of increased group conformity. These students tend to:
   a. Conform with "in" styles such as clothing and hair style.
   b. Desire to be "different," yet within the overall limits of peer conformity.
   c. Adhere to peer group standards along with awareness of "acceptable behavior" within the peer group.
   d. Show considerable peer consciousness: strong need for a feeling of belonging to a group.
4. During the emerging adolescent years, youths begin to experience an increasing sexual awareness, so that girls begin to be more conscious of their characteristics and needs as females, and boys begin to be more conscious of their chararacteristics and needs as males. These students exhibit:
   a. A more advanced physical maturity on the part of girls than of boys at the same chronological age.
   b. In the early part of the emerging adolescent period, there is a tendency to prefer being with members of the same sex. This is more marked in boys than girls.

c. In later stages, boys' and girls' interests in the opposite sex tend to become more openly manifested.

5. Youths at this age begin to expand their horizons, and there is an increase in diverse interests. Their worlds are tending to expand beyond the neighborhood to include greater varieties of people with a diversity of lifestyles. These students are beginning to:
   a. Have a concern for "right," "wrong," and social justice.
   b. Have a concern for less fortunate "others."
   c. Seek approval of and acceptance by adults.
   d. Show interest in races and cultures other than their own.
   e. Desire opportunities to exercise selectivity in the choice of food, activities, and friends—with frequent changes in "close" friendships.
6. Youths during the emerging adolescent years begin to put the skills they have acquired in the elementary schools to use in a variety of situations. Thus, where children at the elementary level tend to concentrate on acquiring the skills themselves, emerging adolescent youths begin to use the skills they have acquired—not only in the school itself, but in their lives generally. These students may experience:
   a. A desire to make their own evaluation of suggestions from others.
   b. An interest in making fuller utilization of basic skills used in elementary school.
   c. Strong, intense interest, not always sustained, in various pursuits.
7. In the process of using various skills in a greater number of areas, emerging adolescents begin to see various relationships that exist between these areas. These students seem to:
   a. Be interested in both concrete and abstract exercises and be more able to deal with abstract concepts than formerly.
   b. Desire opportunities to express originality on an individual basis.
   c. Desire opportunities to participate in practical problem-solving situations.
8. As youths begin to approach adolescence, they become more and more aware of the social phenomenon of adolescence. They have heard a good deal about "being a teenager" and about all the folkways and mores of the teenage culture. As they approach these years, they begin to feel apprehensive about how they will fit into this teenage world. In this sense, then, the emerging adolescent years are characterized by a good deal of apprehensiveness about the impending adolescent years. These students appear to:
   a. Evaluate personal capabilities, both attributes and limitations.
   b. Be sensitive to criticism of personal shortcomings and often are easily offended.
   c. Need experience with frequent success and desire attention and recognition for personal efforts and achievement.
   d. Be anxious, doubtful, and confused about their physical and intellectual development, social relationships, and adult authority.
9. Emerging adolescent youths begin to develop a distinct self-concept. Striving to understand their changing selves, they seek activities to help them psychologically produce their individual maturation. Emerging adolescents tend to:
   a. Begin to understand that they have certain limitations and certain strengths and while they may not be as capable in particular areas as some other students, they may be more capable in other areas.
   b. Ask the questions, "Why am I different from other students my age?" or

conversely, "How am I like other people my age?"

10. Emerging adolescents seem to be more "dichotomized" and they sometimes run to extremes. Thus, emerging adolescents may:
    a. Exhibit a wide range of overt behaviors and moods, thus being alternately quiet-loud, shy-boisterous, fearful-confident, anxious-assured, and so on.
    b. Tend to split into two groups, such as the "ins" and the "outs."

Source: "Position Paper Concerning the Education of the Early Adolescent Enrolled in Middle Schools and Junior High Schools." Lansing, Mich.: Michigan Department of Education, December 1977.

APPENDIX C. MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Students at the middle level, ages 10-14, have distinct physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs. The Ann Arbor Public Schools will provide a program designed to meet the changing needs of these students and provide for the transition between elementary and high school education. In order to address these needs it is our belief that the total school staff must function as a team, along with parents, students, and the community to create and maintain a:

- Middle school, and an attitude, which recognizes the distinct needs of young people during a time of transition, based on the necessity of working consciously with the many developmental changes of young people.
- Middle school, and an attitude, which calls for taking students from where they are and developing programs to meet their needs. It is a time for building and reinforcing skills, delving into increasingly abstract concepts and exploring a multitude of topics and activities.
- Middle school, and an attitude, which assumes that students want to and need to organize their knowledge, learn to work well in groups, and become increasingly independent while recognizing the interdependence of all people.
- Middle school, and an attitude, which encompasses organizational patterns that direct the energy and vitality of emerging adolescents toward the realization of their potential.

In keeping with the Ann Arbor Public Schools instructional goals, it is imperative that the middle school attitude and organization reflect these assumptions. Middle school will provide:

- *Learning*—a strong program that provides for the achievement of all students and recognizes that students have different styles and varied rates of learning; and varied environments that enable students to become increasingly motivated as independent and as cooperative group learners in a multicultural school system and in preparation for a multicultural society.
- *Exploration*—opportunities for the individual to discover and explore new ideas and to develop skills and interests within an environment that acknowledges individual learning styles.
- *Guidance/Support*—support services that promote stability, growth toward self-realization, increasing independence, and responsible behavior.
- *Identity*—opportunities for students to be recognized as individuals and build self-esteem as defined by the student's perception of him/herself and by the regard in which the student is held among other students within the learning community.
- *Physical Development*—experiences and challenges designed to address the rapid changes and varied physical needs of students.
- *Socialization*—experiences that develop positive problem-solving and decision-making skills in order for students to function as increasingly responsible members of groups and the community.

Adopted by Board of Education: November 18, 1987

APPENDIX D. PARENT SURVEY

MIDDLE SCHOOL OPINIONNAIRE

Please rate each of the following ideas about middle schools to show how important each one is to you. Choose the answer that you feel is best and circle the number of that choice in the left hand column. Use the key below to show your feelings.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Important	Important	Fairly Important	Not Very Important	Not Important At All

Example: If having guidance and counseling service available for each student is "Fairly Important" to you, you would circle the "3" in the left hand column.

1 2 3 4 5 1. Guidance and counseling services should be available for each student.

1 2 3 4 5 2. Each student should have at least one teacher who knows him/her well.

1 2 3 4 5 3. Small-group and individual guidance should also be provided by a classroom teacher under the direction of the school counselor.

1 2 3 4 5 4. Opportunities for after-school social activities (such as parties, athletic games, boosters) should be provided for students.

1 2 3 4 5 5. Opportunities should be provided to help students develop good attitudes and standards for themselves.

1 2 3 4 5 6. Club activities should be scheduled during the day to provide opportunities for group work in areas of common interest.

1 2 3 4 5 7. Students should have opportunities to expand and discover their individual interests and aptitudes through exploratory and enrichment courses.

1 2 3 4 5 8. Remedial instruction should be available to assist students who have difficulty in mastering basic skills.

1 2 3 4 5 9. A wide variety of intramural activities (team competition within the same school) should be offered to allow all students to participate.

1 2 3 4 5 10. Physical education should emphasize health, physical fitness, and lifetime sports.

1 2 3 4 5 11. Students should have an opportunity to express creativity through

student newspapers, drama, and music.

1 2 3 4 5 12. A variety of teaching methods and materials should be utilized rather than a single textbook approach.

1 2 3 4 5 13. Students should use and apply basic skills through projects and "hands-on" activities.

1 2 3 4 5 14. Students should proceed at their own rate according to their abilities.

1 2 3 4 5 15. Behavior problems should be handled, when possible, by teachers and parents without the involvement of the administrators.

1 2 3 4 5 16. An alternative program to suspension should be provided for the students having behavior problems (in-school suspension program).

1 2 3 4 5 17. Opportunities should be provided for parents to have a conference with all of their child's teachers at the same time.

1 2 3 4 5 18. Parent volunteers should be involved assisting in the classroom.

1 2 3 4 5 19. Sixth grade students should receive special attention as they make the transition to the middle school (for example, orientation programs, individual and group guidance services).

1 2 3 4 5 20. Major disciplinary problems should be handled by the school administrators.

1 2 3 4 5 21. Course development should reflect a coordinated curriculum.

1 2 3 4 5 22. A well-defined district scope and sequence should be available for each academic discipline.

1 2 3 4 5 23. Instruction should be planned and delivered based upon formal and informal assessment of student skills.

1 2 3 4 5 24. A team of teachers should plan and implement the basic instructional program for a given group of students, i.e., language arts, math, social studies, science, and reading teacher working with the same students.

1 2 3 4 5 25. Physical and health education programs should emphasize understanding and care of the body at this stage of development.

1 2 3 4 5 26. The middle school program should be a unique program bridging the gap between the elementary schools and the high schools.

1 2 3 4 5 27. Provisions should be made for short-term exploration/enrichment

activities in addition to the regularly scheduled electives.

1 2 3 4 5 28. A common planning period should be provided for teams of teachers who work with the same students.

1 2 3 4 5 29. Opportunities should be provided for students to understand the community in which they live and to develop an attitude for community improvement; community resources should be used regularly.

1 2 3 4 5 30. Schoolwide opportunities should be provided to help students develop good attitudes and standards for themselves.

Please list the three most pressing needs for middle level students.

1._____

2._____

3._____

Suggestions and Comments:

APPENDIX E. STUDENT SURVEY

ANN ARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

You can help us make it easier for students to come to this school. Tell us what worried you when you entered this school. Please review the following items and fill in the appropriate blank on the answer sheet.

---

1 - Not Worried About This
2 - Hardly Worried About This
3 - Worried About This
4 - Very Worried About This

---

1. Being different from others
2. Drugs
3. Failure
4. Giving presentation in front of others
5. Being picked on
6. Being made fun of
7. Being sent to the principal/house leader
8. Changing clothes in front of others in physical education
9. Getting lost
10. Hard work
11. Getting along with older students
12. Homework assignments
13. Unkind people
14. Lockers
15. Getting on the wrong bus
16. Lunchroom
17. Getting to class on time
18. Keeping up with assignments
19. Making friends
20. Having an adult who listens
21. Moving from room to room
22. Length of class periods
23. Knowing what is expected of me
24. New rules and routines
25. Reading textbooks
26. New teachers
27. Rumors that I've heard
28. Size of the building
29. Taking showers in physical education
30. Taking tests

APPENDIX F. PLANNING TIMELINE

ANN ARBOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS

YEAR 1

DATE	ITEM
May	• Establish summer planning committees • Survey staff/parents regarding middle school issues • Conduct staff development needs assessment
June	• Planning committees meet
July	• Prepare draft mission/philosophy statement • Develop proposed planning process
August	• Prepare charge to steering committee • Make recommendations for future planning • Conduct staff development workshops
September	• Distribute and receive community survey regarding middle school mission/philosophy statement • Develop charge to planning committees • Provide information to parents of 4th, 5th, 6th grade students • Program development committee established • Process for student/parent input developed • Initial discussion with union regarding staffing • Develop plans to interface with other committees • Develop plans to communicate with parents and the community • Plan district/school staff development programs for this school year • Gather base-line data regarding current middle level students/programs • Conduct community survey • Assess student needs for transition • Critique mission/philosophy statement • Make modifications based on input • Initiate middle level school administrator workshops • Develop list of board of education policies requiring review/modification
October	• Assess facility needs • Initiate school-based planning • Develop plan to review board of education policies • Planning subcommittees established
November	• Initiate planning for facility modifications

	• Develop marketing plan for middle level concept • Recommend mission/philosophy statement to board of education • Develop budget proposals for next year regarding pilots, planning • Provide resources for school-based staff development
February	• Program standards recommended by planning committee to steering committee
March	• Program standards recommended to board of education
April	• Conduct staff development needs assessment • Middle school program standards adopted by board of education • Designate middle school administrative teams • Assess staff preference for placement • Pilot proposals developed
May	• Plan summer staff development workshops • Finalize tentative middle school staffing
June	• Establish school transition teams • Gather data on middle level students

YEAR 2

DATE	ITEM
June	• Initiate summer production for new curricular offerings
August	• Conduct staff development workshops • Assess equipment/material needs of schools
September	• Initiate school planning with "new" middle school staff • Implement pilots • Plan/implement school/district staff development programs • Develop process/plan for evaluation of pilots
October	• Plan/implement reorganization activities for staff/parents/students
November	• Recommendations for middle school electives made by curricular departments • Prepare budget proposals for program implementation • Conduct initial planning for materials and equipment moves • Finalize plans for facility modifications
January	• Outline personal development (advisory) curriculum
February	• Assess equipment/materials needs

	• Recommendation for sports/activities program to steering committee
March	• Recommend sports/activities program to board of education
April	• Finalize staff development for implementation • Identify specific equipment/materials to be moved/distributed • Sports/activities program adopted by board of education • Conduct school climate surveys
May	• Evaluate pilots • Finalize middle school program evalution model needs of schools
June	• Finalize middle school staffing • Finalize facility modifications • Gather data regarding middle level students

YEAR 3

DATE	ITEM
August	• Finalize equipment/materials distribution • Conduct staff development sessions • Provide opportunities for staff planning
September	• Implement middle school program • Initiate process for monitoring implementation
October	• Establish regular cycle for program evaluation
November	• Establish process for data collection/analysis regarding implementation
May	• Evaluate implementation

Appendix G. Teacher Transfer Process

MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN ANN ARBOR

Clague	Scarlett
Forsythe	Slavson
Mya	Tappan

1. Credential Requirements for Middle Schools

Teachers wishing to teach at the middle school level must possess a valid Michigan teaching certificate. Both elementary and secondary certificates are applicable to the middle level.

Teachers with an elementary certificate may teach through the eighth grade. Teachers with a secondary certificate may teach in the seventh and eighth grade, and may teach in the sixth grade for less than half their teaching assignment.

Agreement has been reached with the AAEA on modified contract language that states that "teachers who were employed by the board prior to September 1989 and who apply for positions at the middle school level shall not be subject to the board's majors and minors policy. Those same teachers' lack of a major or minor in the subject of a middle school vacancy for which they are applying, shall not be a restriction from their consideration."

2. Characteristics of Middle School Teachers

Middle School Update 9, published in November 1987, described the characteristics of middle schools and middle level teachers. It is enclosed for your review.

ANN ARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MIDDLE SCHOOL UPDATE 9
Characteristics of Middle Level Teachers—November 1987

This update will describe the components of effective middle level programs as well as provide a description of the characteristics of successful middle level educators. This information is provided so that the professional staff has information with which to think about their preference for placement when Ann Arbor implements middle schools in September 1989. Discussions continue with the Ann Arbor Education Association regarding the process to be used in identifying the middle school staff. We have agreed to tentatively identify the staff of Ann Arbor's middle schools by the end of this school year.

Some staff members have sought clarification regarding the issue of teacher certification. Teachers with elementary certificates can teach in grades K-8 and staff with secondary certificates can teach in grades 7-12. Since middle schools will include grades 6-8 it will be necessary to have a staff that has a mixture of certifications: elementary as well as secondary. Additionally, there is some flexibility in the assignment that a middle school teacher may have as long as the majority of their day does not go beyond the limits of their certificate.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

A middle school is an idea. When that idea is operational, it is a program that attempts to meet the needs of students in the middle years, usually from ages 10 to 14. Middle school attempts to provide a bridge between elementary and secondary education and provides a program uniquely suited to middle level students. The Ann Arbor Schools is currently planning the program which will be implemented in Ann Arbor's middle schools in September 1989. This update will provide information about the characteristics of middle schools, and describe the characteristics of effective middle school teachers.

Middle schools of various models have been implemented throughout the nation. Each model has unique characteristics but research has shown that there are a number of common elements which characterize effective middle level programs.

QUALITIES OF MIDDLE LEVEL TEACHERS

The National Middle School Association in a recent publication reviewing research on effective middle level practices identified 18 "clusters" of teacher behaviors that contribute to the success of middle level teachers. We know that these characteristics are possessed by our professional staff and that all good teachers at any level possess them. Nevertheless, for your information, this research found that effective middle school teachers . . .

1. *Have a positive self-concept.* They identify with others, feel adequate, trust themselves, and see themselves as worthy and likeable. They need not be the center of attention at all times, and are comfortable letting the classroom activities or the students themselves take precedence some of the time.
2. *Demonstrate warmth.* Teachers who seek contact with students, use affectionate words, smile and look pleasant are generally regarded as more effective. Teacher displays of warmth are important because teachers who like students (and show it) tend to have students who like each other.
3. *Are optimistic.* More effective teachers express positive attitudes and pleasant feelings in the classroom. They are optimistic in their assessments of individual student capabilities and tend to be encouraging.
4. *Are enthusiastic.* Effective teachers are vigorous in their presentations and involved in the activities of the class. They tend to gesture and avoid "reading" prepared lessons.
5. *Are flexible.* These teachers can change the focus in the middle of a lesson if the students become bored or uninterested; they adjust easily to changes in plans, time schedules, absence, or student behavior; they respond to constructive requests for changes in classroom procedure.
6. *Are spontaneous.* Spontaneous teachers can capitalize on unexpected incidents that arise in class. They also tend to encourage student expression and do not avoid situations that deviate from planned activities.
7. *Accept students.* Accepting teachers avoid criticism, not by refusing to tell a student he or she is wrong, but by using sincere and frequent statements of approval. These teachers are disinclined to berate or belittle children in front of others or to display negative perceptions publicly.
8. *Demonstrate awareness of developmental levels.* They assign tasks appropriate to a student's ability and adjust tasks when students become confused or uncertain.

They show less tendency to push students into activities for which they are not ready, and they express less bewilderment over student inability to perform tasks.

9. *Demonstrate knowledge of subject matter.* Knowledgeable teachers are able to structure lessons and alter instruction on the basis of student needs. They are able to monitor learning and engage students in instructional activities related to significant concepts.
10. *Use a variety of instructional activities and materials.* These teachers are able to vary instruction in accordance with individual student learning styles.
11. *Structure instruction.* Teachers who spend time discussing, explaining, and stimulating cognitive processes in organized ways encourage greater pupil performance. They tend to review previous lessons, outlining main topics of planned lessons, signalling the beginnings and endings of lessons, underscoring important points, and summarizing. These teachers are less likely to begin lessons without organizing them, change activities abruptly, or begin new topics without summarizing previous ones.
12. *Monitor learning.* These teachers check test papers and student work in order to adjust instruction. They also move about the room, observing students and making suggestions. In lieu of "busywork," they used extra time for creative, social, or interest-directed activities.
13. *Use concrete materials and focused learning strategies.* These teachers use models, objects, and visual aids to provoke imagery; attend to the manipulation of concrete images before moving to formal operations; and focus student attention on problem-solving situations.
14. *Ask varied questions.* Using both higher order and lower order questions, in appropriate situations, produces improved student performance. Using a variety of question types for maximizing instructional effectiveness is preferable to relying on a single type of question.
15. *Incorporate indirectness in teaching.* Indirect teachers build on student statements, praise students, encourage student talk, and minimize criticism, lecture, and confusion.
16. *Incorporate "success building" behavior in teaching.* Success-oriented teachers use positive reinforcers, encouragement, and praise of student work. They are disinclined to use sarcasm, shame, and harassment.
17. *Diagnose individual learning needs and prescribe individual instruction.* More effective teachers monitor the completion of tasks, perceive various learning rates, and allow adequate time for completion. They design interest-based learning tasks, define expectations on an individual basis, and allow for independent and small group activities. They also demonstrate less of a tendency to teach an entire class the same lesson and to grade on a group standard.
18. *Listen.* Teachers who listen to students attend to and build upon student thoughts and expressions. They acknowledge student input by summarizing what was said and by avoiding the appearance of preoccupation.

What emerges from this listing of characteristics is the image of a self-confident professional who demonstrates both an awareness of student needs and varied learning strategies.[1]

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1. J. Howard Johnston and Glenn C. Markle, *What Research Says to the Middle Level Practitioner* (Columbus, Ohio: National Middle School Association, 1986), pp. 16-18.

WHAT'S NEXT?

This update has provided you with information regarding components of effective middle school programs and the characteristics of teachers who are successful in working with middle level students. We are still developing the specific characteristics of Ann Arbor's middle schools. A Program Development subcommittee composed of teachers, counselors, pupil personnel staff, administrators, parents, and community members is currently meeting and will make recommendations to the Middle School Steering Committee regarding the specific components of middle schools in Ann Arbor. Their recommendations are due to the Steering Committee in February.

The Ann Arbor Education Association, the Office of Human Resource Services, and the Office of Instruction have initiated discussions regarding the process to be used in identifying staff preferences for placement when Ann Arbor implements middle schools. We have agreed that the staff of Ann Arbor's middle schools will be tentatively identified by June 1988. This will allow the staff to participate in planning throughout the 1988/89 school year.

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COMMON ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE MIDDLE LEVEL PROGRAMS

1. A comprehensive academic program that stresses skill development for each student
2. A program of exploratory and enrichment experiences
3. The use of instructional methods appropriate to the age group: individualized instruction, variable group sizes, multi-media approaches, independent study programs, inquiry-oriented instruction
4. Flexibility in scheduling and student grouping
5. Cooperative planning and team teaching
6. Planned opportunities for teacher-student guidance, which may include a home base or adviser-advisee program
7. Cooperative instead of competitive activities
8. At least some interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary studies
9. Emphasis on increasing the student's independence, responsibility, and self-discipline
10. Opportunities for students to formulate personal values and standards
11. Physical and health education based solely on the needs of the students

Perhaps the most important component of a successful middle school is the composition of the instructional staff. The qualities that contribute to successful teaching at the middle level are the qualities that contribute to success at the elementary and high school levels as well. However, effective middle level instruction is implemented by teachers who have the flexibility of the generalist, the expertise of the specialist, and the enthusiasm of one who understands and enjoys the unique characteristics of students at the middle level.

One of the approaches most effective with middle level students is the interdisciplinary approach to teaching. This approach to teaching is compatible with middle school goals such as individualizing instruction, personalizing classroom interaction, and building flexibility. Interdisciplinary teaching patterns cause the necessary involvement of the teacher in the learning process itself. The result is that the instructional staff tends to grow and develop along with the students.

Successful middle level educators understand the nature of the middle level learner, of the teaching and learning process, and of the educational research that bears on their teaching responsibilities.

Instructional skills possessed by successful middle level educators include skills in the ability to work across subject matter lines, skill at teaching problem solving, use of multi-media approaches, classroom management, and skills in advising students.

3. Secondary Projections 1989-90

	12th	11th	10th	9th	TOTAL
HURON	435*	401*	392*	411*	1,639*
PIONEER	532	487	426	452	1,897
COMMUNITY	95	95	95	40	325
CLEMENTE	6	9	3	6	24
TOTAL	1,068	992	916	909	3,885

*May be too high due to inclusion of N. Campus.

	8th	7th	6th	TOTAL
CLAGUE	216*	224*	208*	648*
FORSYTHE	181**	202**	180	563**
SCARLETT	141	174	168	483
SLAUSON	191	199	170	560
TAPPAN	184	173	235	592
TOTAL	913	972	961	2,846

*May be too high due to inclusion of N. Campus.
**Includes MYA of 40 each in 7th and 8th grades.

NOTES: In 1990-91 middle school enrollments will increase by 116 districtwide.

In 1990-91 four-year high school enrollments will decrease by 100 districtwide.
All projections are current enrollments rolled forward two years. No formula was used.

4. Middle School Program Standards

February 29, 1988

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

BELIEF STATEMENT: The school climate must actively demonstrate the spirit of teamwork among all who are members of a school community.

The board of education and central administration must ensure the time necessary for middle school administrators to actively lead and be involved with staff, students, parents, and programs.

1. In order to provide flexibility for students in the school day, middle school schedules shall include block-time scheduling as appropriate. These schedules shall provide academic block-time and elective block-time, which should overlap to facilitate interdisciplinary instruction.
2. In order to facilitate collaborative planning among the staff, middle school schedules shall include common planning time for both academic and elective teams. The elective planning time may or may not overlap the academic planning time.
3. So that students and staff can learn and work in a personalized environment, there shall be an administrative plan for each middle school which provides for small administrative/teaching units.
4. In order to provide clerical support to the administrative/teaching units, each middle school shall be provided adequate staff, to include one secretary per administrative/teaching unit and an office manager who will assume responsibility for building operations.
5. So that students, staff, parents, and the community develop and maintain ownership of the middle school program, each middle school shall develop a process for the continued involvement of these constituencies in decision making.
6. In order to ensure the successful ongoing implementation of the middle school program the board of education shall provide the necessary curriculum and staff development. Curricular and staff development must include involvement of staff in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum, time to develop/organize the program, and financial resources to support these activities (e.g., materials, stipends).

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

BELIEF STATEMENT: Guidance is the responsibility of all professional staff in each middle school.

1. So that each middle school student may establish a warm and supportive relationship with at least one adult, each middle school shall develop an adviser/advisee program which will involve the greatest number of professional staff members possible, and include daily scheduled time to the extent possible for preparation and delivery of a predetermined guidance program.

2. In order to provide support to middle school students in resolving educational and personal problems, the services of a full-time, certified counselor shall be available to each administrative/teaching unit to provide such services as individual and small group counseling, and support to the adviser/advisee program.
3. To maintain continuity for students, counselors and advisers will remain with the same group of students to the extent possible through the middle school years.

CURRICULUM

1. The integrity of the district scope and sequence of curricular objectives shall be respected in order to maintain developmental appropriateness and continuity within content areas. The common learnings and the content area objectives shall be the basis of the curriculum.
2. The following curricular requirements must be met by all middle school students enrolled in the Ann Arbor Public Schools.

Content	Time Equivalent
Language Arts/Reading	One full-year course in grade 6
Language Arts	One full-year course in grade 7 and grade 8
Mathematics	Three full-year courses
Science	Three full-year courses
Social Studies	Three full-year courses
Library Skills	
Study Skills	
Physical Education	One half-year course in each of grades 6,7,8
Health	One half-year course
Personal Development	

Required Sixth Grade Exploratory Classes

Art	One quarter-year course
Home Economics	One quarter-year course
Music	One quarter-year course
Performing Arts	One quarter-year course
Technology Education	One quarter-year course
Foreign Language (French, German, Spanish)	One half-year course
Computer Technology (to include keyboarding)	One quarter-year course

1. Middle school administrators shall have the discretion to grant waivers to the required curriculum, in exceptional cases, when the philosophical intent of the policy has been fulfilled by an applicant.
2. Library skills and study skills will be taught at all grade levels in the content areas and will be delivered cooperatively with the media specialists.
3. The personal development program will help students develop positive feelings of self-worth and self-esteem in a structured, but non-threatening environment to be

delivered through the adviser/advisee program.

4. So that every middle school student is assured of the opportunity to have the same curricular experiences, each middle school shall offer the following minimum range of elective experiences (to include exploratory, enrichment, performance, and/or remedial opportunities).

LISTS TO BE DEVELOPED BY CURRICULAR AREAS

Scope and sequence, and objectives for these elective courses will be district developed.

5. In order to meet the needs and interests of students and staff, each middle school shall have the freedom to develop other elective experiences.
6. Middle school curriculum shall maintain high expectations for all students. However, to accommodate a continuum of student needs and abilities, both curriculum and instruction shall provide support programs and enrichment/acceleration programs. Such programs shall align with the district policy with regard to instructional grouping (Policy 6152) and able learners (Regulation R6171).7.
   Enrichment shall be offered to all middle school students. In order to provide these opportunities for students each middle school staff shall include an able learner facilitator. Opportunities will also be provided for in-depth investigation of topics.
7. The district shall develop a plan for flexible advancement in each curricular area.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

1. In order to provide a personalized environment for students, facilitate the correlation of content, and encourage collaboration among the staff, all middle school students shall be taught in the areas of math, science, language arts, and social studies by an interdisciplinary team of two to four teachers. Building-based special education staff shall be involved regularly with interdisciplinary teams.

   A successful interdisciplinary team situation at the middle school requires the following components be present:

   - common planning time
   - teacher/administrator commitment and dedication to interdisciplinary team teaching
   - cooperation, mutual respect, and a willingness to work together
   - balanced personnel selection (i.e. ethnic, gender, varied teaching styles, certification).

2. Recognizing a range of student readiness, middle school instructional methods shall provide systematic progression from concrete experiences toward more abstract experiences.
3. In order to provide success for all students, the middle school program shall include a variety of teaching methods, including, but not limited to:

   - mastery learning
   - cooperative learning
   - individualized learning
   - multi-sensory

4. In order to provide for the varied learning styles and instructional needs of students, the middle school program shall include the use of varied materials and experiences to address curricular objectives.

5. In order to promote student learning, the middle school program shall include various forms of technology (e.g., computer programs, videocassettes, films, etc.).

COCURRICULAR AND SPORTS PROGRAMS

1. In order to address student needs, and involve students in a variety of school activities, each middle school shall offer and encourage participation of students in a variety of cocurricular activities or interest groups both during and after the school day.
2. The middle school sports program shall include both intramural and interscholastic components designed to meet the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social needs of middle school students. Both components shall emphasize maximum participation, instruction, skill building, and the development of healthy attitudes toward recreation and competition. Both components shall have equal access to the facilities and resources of the middle schools.
3. The middle school sports program shall provide all students with the opportunity to participate in individual and team sports at levels appropriate to their age, skill level, and physical development. The program shall adhere to a "no cut" policy except where limitations are necessary due to safety, facility, or time considerations. Intramural activities shall take place both during and after the school day.

5. Timelines for Teacher Transfer Process

April 15 Administrative assignments for middle schools and four year high schools completed

April 18 The Office of Human Resource Services will distribute voluntary teacher election forms to intermediate and elementary school staffs. That form shall ask those teachers who wish to be considered for the initial transfer to the new programs to identify their first, second, and third choices for schools to which they wish to transfer, and to identify their first, second, and third choices for subjects they would like to teach. Teachers will also be asked to provide rationale for their request to be assigned to their first choice subject matter class assignment.

By not completing a request it is presumed that you do not want to transfer.

April 21 An information session jointly sponsored by the AAEA and the administration will be held to provide interested staff members with the opportunity to receive information about middle schools, four-year high schools and the transfer process.

April 27 Teachers who wish to be considered for the initial transfer must return their election forms to the Office of Human Resource Services by 5:00 p.m.

May 16 By this date the Association President, President-Elect, and an Association minority representative identified by the President, shall review initial intended placement offers with the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resource Services and the Executive Director of Instruction, to ensure adherence to the procedures and criteria.

May 20 Offers of initial reassignment to middle school and four-year high school shall be sent to the affected teachers.

May 27 Teachers must respond to the Office of Human Resource Services by 5:00 p.m. of their acceptance of the transfer.

6. Teacher Transfer Process

The following language from a Memorandum of Agreement between the AAEA and the Board of Education explains the transfer process.

Every effort will be made to place teachers in their first preference for building and subject matter. It is understood by the parties that initial placement in a specific subject matter does not guarantee final assignment to such classes, but rather an expectation that preference will be given in the planning process. The actual assignments will depend on the number of sections to be taught, the configuration of team assignments, and other middle school and high school needs.

If the number of teachers listing the same building or subject matter is less than or equal to the number needed, the teachers will be placed, unless input from the receiving administrators provides objective information that causes a teacher not to be placed in that assignment. If the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resource Services agrees that the information, if valid, is going to preclude that teacher's assignment in their first preference, she shall promptly meet with the teacher and the Association President to present the information and verify its validity, and then make a final decision. If the information is used to preclude placement, it shall be in writing and signed by the administrator.

If the number of teachers listing a particular building and assignment exceeds the number of available positions, placement will be based on the criteria below. The criteria are not listed in order of priority.

- Certification majors and minors for the high school level
- Length of service in the Ann Arbor Public Schools
- Current assignment to sixth or ninth grade classes
- Affirmative action for race and gender
- Program need, including:
  1. following students from the teacher's previous home school
  2. subject matter balance at the middle school level
- Principal input as described above

If a teacher is not placed in his/her first preference, the remaining preferences shall be redefined as first and second, and the process repeated. Teachers who are not offered placement in any of their preferences shall be notified that they have the option to place themselves on a preferred transfer list. Persons on the list shall have their application considered before other teachers from the regular transfer process are placed, in the Spring/Summer of 1989.

Once initial assignments for 1989/90 are made, those staff members shall be considered part of the 1988/89 faculty for purposes of transfer and reassignment.

Newly formed high school departments shall meet to plan the curriculum articulation and discuss the class assignment process during 1988/89 school year.

Intermediate level teachers moving to the high school level will be given equal

treatment with current staff in assignment to classes in their major.

7. Planning Expectations of Current and Newly Assigned Staff During the Period of June 1988 - September 1989

Teachers currently assigned or newly assigned to the middle schools and four-year high schools should expect to be actively involved in the planning process throughout the period from June 1988 until September 1989. The Middle School Steering Committee has recommended that 10 opportunities be provided for the newly formed staffs to meet and discuss their plans for implementing the reorganization in September 1989.

It is anticipated that the first meeting of the newly formed staff will take place before the end of the current school year. A final decision has not been made about the structure of the planning time, but options discussed include: time in late August, use of evenings, releasing students, and use of staff meetings. The board of education will provide each school with the resources to conduct the planning.

It is hoped that each member of the newly formed staff will take advantage of these planning opportunities to acquaint themselves with their colleagues, participate in decisions regarding implementation, and avail themselves of staff development opportunities.

8. Moving Arrangements

Elementary classroom teachers moving to middle schools and intermediate school teachers moving to high schools will receive a half day for essential chores related to their classrooms. A substitute will be provided for this time.

Decisions about when to employ substitutes will be determined at each building. A teacher may request a substitute (when available) during June 1989 or a teacher may use his/her own time for packing and request a half-day substitute (not during September or October) during the 1989/90 school year.

9. Voluntary Request for Transfer

Staff members who choose not to apply for positions in the middle school or who are not selected during this initial transfer process may take advantage of the voluntary request for transfer process outlined in section 7.921 through 7.929.5 of the Master Agreement.

Each April, staff members may elect to request a transfer by completing the appropriate forms and returning them to the Office of Human Resource Services by April 15.

Following student course selection in the spring of 1989 specific vacancies will be known and posted. Staff members can utilize the "Voluntary Request for Transfer" process to apply for these positions.

APPENDIX H. PILOT EVALUATION FORM

Name of Pilot_____ Date_____

Location_____ Grade Level_____

Contact Person_____

Please check most appropriate description:

_____ required

_____ curriculum addition

_____ curriculum replacement for:_____

_____ elective course

_____ update or review of curriculum

What are the objectives/questions to be answered by the pilot?

Define the student population benefiting from this program/course (age/grade level(s), heterogeneity of instruction, gender, multicultural consideration, etc.)

Curriculum
Clearly identify goals/objectives of the program/course.

Instruction
Unique instructional strategies used.

Support(s) required for the program/course.

Assessment
Student learning measurement methods including actual student achievement data.

Structure
Scheduling pattern

Grouping pattern

Resources needed: Based upon pilot results
Anticipated FTE:

Staff Development:

Materials/Equipment

What "worked" and why

What didn't "work" and why

Recommendations for Improvement:

Other Comments:

APPENDIX I. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

MIDDLE SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

School_____ Date_____

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

1. Number of houses_____

2. Describe the organization of your houses.

   How was this decision made?

   When will administrators be assigned to houses?

   When will teachers be assigned to houses?

   How will teachers be assigned to houses?

3. Describe your school decision-making model:

4. Describe building-based planning sessions:

DATE	TOPIC
Sept 28	
Nov 2	
Nov 30	
Jan	
Feb 22	
Apr 19	

5. When is your staffing session?_____

   When will your tentative schedule be finalized?

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

1. Describe the organization of advisory program.

2. Who may be an adviser?

   How will advisers be selected?

3. How will students be assigned to a counselor's caseload?

   When will this take place?

4. Describe strategies for maintaining continuity for students in the guidance program.

CURRICULUM

1. Will you offer any school-based electives?

   If so, what will those electives be?

2. Describe your plans for enrichment.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

1. How will the teaching teams be organized?

2. When will teachers know their team?

   How will the teams be formed?

3. Describe your plans for assigning students to teams.

4. Describe any grouping patterns, other than heterogeneity, which you may use. When will they be used?

COCURRICULAR AND SPORTS

1. When will your intramural director be selected?

   What process will be used for this selection?

2. Describe your plans for the intramural program.

3. Describe plans for other cocurricular activities.

OTHER

1. Describe the membership of your transition committee.

   Who is the chairperson?

   How often does the committee meet?

   Describe any subcommittees and their function.

2. Describe orientation activities planned for the spring of 1989.

3. Describe orientation activities planned for the fall of 1989.

APPENDIX J. COMMUNICATION PLAN/SCHEDULE

April/May 1988	• Interviews with parents, teachers, administrators, and students
May 1988	• Presentation of marketing plan and program themes
June 1988	• Publication of first newsletters to parents, teachers, and community: general description of plans
September 1988	• Auxiliary materials, all carrying program themes, printed and distributed: note pads, folders, stickers, etc.
November 1988	• Publication of second newsletter to parents, teachers, and community: details of program preparations and construction activity • "Mid-way" assessment of program/Quorum and school officials
December 1988	• Printing and distribution of letters to eighth graders and their parents regarding the change to four-year high schools • Distribution of buttons
January 1989	• Printing and distribution of bookmarks • Printing and distribution of letter to ninth grade students and parents
February 1989	• Printing and distribution of letter to fifth and sixth graders and their parents regarding the change to middle schools • Printing and distribution of posters • Publication of third newsletter to parents, teachers, and community: focus on construction activity
March/April 1989	• Second letter to students and parents about activities (tours, visits, orientations) planned in connection with new grade structure and move to new schools
June 1989	• Publication of fourth newsletter to parents, teachers, and community: status report of program preparation • Assessment of program and determination of tasks still to be performed

APPENDIX K. DECISION MATRIX

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM STANDARDS

STANDARD	IMPLEMENTATION SCHOOL	DISTRICT	ISSUES
SCHOOL ORGANIZATION			
1. Block-Time Scheduling	X		Room usage Perhaps more staff Adoption of scheduling package
2. Common Planning Time	X		
3. Administrative/Teaching Teams	X		Bd policy says every admin works with a unit
4. Clerical Support		X	Negotiations with clerical unit regarding office manager role
5. Participation in Decision Making	X		Time to participate
6. Staff Development			District approval of time and financial resources
- Planning Time	X	X	Schools plan for use of
- Financial Resources	X	X	time and resources
- Activities	X	X	Resource coordination
Other			
No. of Hours		X	Contract implication
Bell Schedule	X		Must comply with contract provisions
GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING			
1. Adviser/Advisee			
- Curriculum		X	Modified Anchor Program
- Organization	X		Contract implications Less likely role for elective teachers

STANDARD	IMPLEMENTATION SCHOOL	DISTRICT	ISSUES
2. Counselors	X	X	Need to describe role of teacher advisers and counselors
3. Maintain continuity	X		
CURRICULUM			
1. Scope and Sequence		X	
Common Learnings		X	
2. Curriculum Requirements			
- course content		X	Need to integrate exploratory units
- scheduling	X		
3. District Electives	X	X	Schools responsible for offering and scheduling
4. School-Based Electives	X		Need to develop process for selection and granting permission
5. High Expectations	X	X	
Support Programs	X	X	
6. Enrichment Programs	X	X	Not a pull-out program
Facilitator	X	X	District provides resource School determines role
7. Flexible Advancement Plan		X	To be developed in each area as curriculum is modified
INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS			
1. Interdisciplinary Teams	X		
2. Methods: concrete to abstract	X	X	District provides resources and incorporates into curriculum as revised;
3. Variety of teaching methods	X	X	

4. Varied materials	X	X	Schools monitor implementation by staff
5. Varied technology	X	X	
COCURRICULAR AND SPORTS			
1. Activities Program			
- during school	X	X	Contract implications Community Education role needs clarification
- after school	X	X	
2. Sports Program			
- intramural	X		Need to develop program options and clarify "groundrules" Coordinate with PE program
- interscholastic	X	X	District coordination of seasons and offerings Schools coordinate use of facilities
3. Opportunity To Participate	X	X	
OTHER ITEMS			

APPENDIX L. PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

National Middle School Association
4807 Evanswood Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43229
(614) 848-8211

National Association of Secondary School Principals
1904 Association Drive
Reston, Va. 22091
(703) 860-0200

National Resources Center for Middle Grade Education
University of South Florida
College of Education EDU 115
Tampa, Fla. 33620
(813) 974-2530

Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools
The Johns Hopkins Unviersity
3505 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, Md. 21218

The Center for Early Adolescence
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Suite 223, Carr Mill Mall
Carrboro, N.C . 27510
(919) 966-1148